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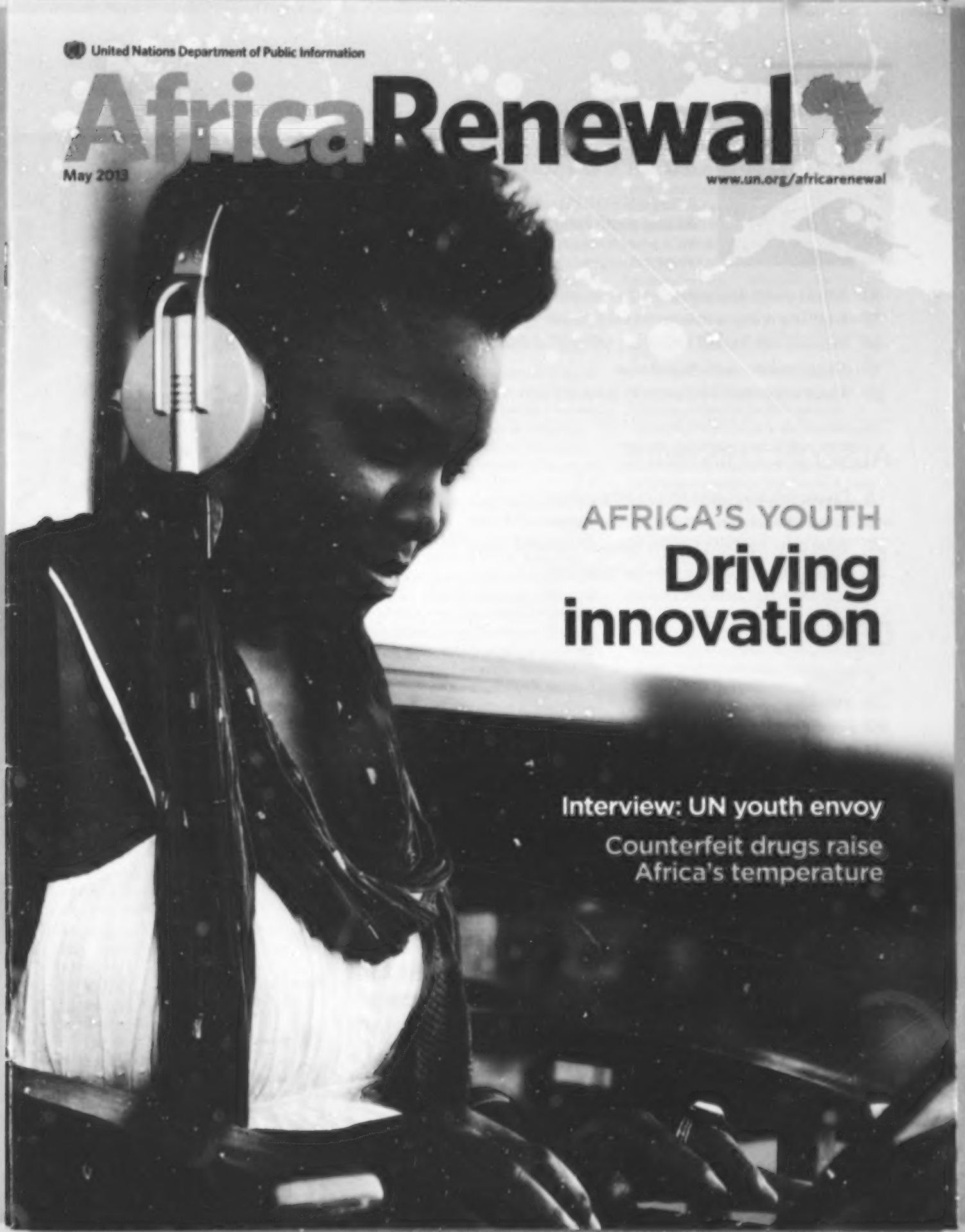

AFRICA'S YOUTH
Driving innovation

Interview: UN youth envoy

Counterfeit drugs raise Africa's temperature

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A young woman uses a computer at iHub, Nairobi's innovation hub for the technology community.

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African youth hungry for connectivity.

📷 *Jonathan Kalan*

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Conflict in Mali's northern region has displaced thousands of children and their families.
OCHA/Nicole Lawrence

Malian children face education crisis

Conflict disrupts schools

By Kingsley Ighobor

While the world remains focused on ending Mali's conflict following rebel incursions into the northern part of the country early last year, there are about 400,000 Malian children facing severe disruptions in their education, warns the UN Children's Fund, UNICEF. The fund and other aid agencies need $18 million to reverse the situation. So far, donor response has been poor, says IRIN, a UN humanitarian news service. As of March, UNICEF has been able to raise only $3 million, creating panic among aid agencies.

"Most of the donors have drawn back after the [2012] crisis - we are still trying to mobilize as much funding as possible," Euphrates Gobina, the head of education at UNICEF in Mali told IRIN. The real problem is that donors are far more concerned about life-saving issues than they are about health and education, adds IRIN.

According to Lori Heninger, the director of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies, which helps coordinate non-profits providing education in conflict areas, parents are the ones mostly asking for interventions in education. She describes as "pretty abysmal" last year's 0.9% devoted to education from the humanitarian budget.

Mali's government has been too preoccupied with the rebellion to make any meaningful intervention. Maiga Dramane, head of basic education at the education ministry says the lack of education was having enormous psychological impact on the children.

Most of the displaced children are from northern Mali, the region hit hardest by the rebellion. Even before the rebel invasion, teachers in the towns of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu were on strike for better service conditions. When the Islamist rebels took over a swath of northern Mali, they also declared Sharia law and were set to introduce Qur'anic schools, which require boys and girls to attend separate classes.

Teachers, parents and pupils had to flee to the south and now expect UNICEF and other charity organizations to help rescue children's education. "When a teacher is afraid to teach and when a student is afraid to go to school, the whole education is at risk," said UNICEF's Representative in Mali, Françoise Ackermans. The agency is dispensing psychological support and mine awareness to students who were exposed to violence. But with the country still highly volatile, getting students back to school remains a huge challenge.

Mothers' health is improving across Africa

By Arao Ameny

In recent years, the shrill cries of a newborn baby have been bringing more shouts of joy than of anguish in maternity wards across Africa. That is because maternal deaths are decreasing on the continent, says Gifty Addico, a South Africa-based adviser for the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). New figures in a UN report, *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2010*, show that maternal mortality has declined by 41 per cent in the past 10 years in sub-Saharan Africa. "But we need to do more to make sure that every mother lives to see her child," Ms. Addico told *Africa Renewal*.

An awareness campaign called Every Woman, Every Child, initiated by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in September 2010 aims to save the lives of 16 million women and children by 2015, as part of the broader drive for the UN Millennium Development Goals. A year earlier the African Union partnered with the UNFPA to launch a similar programme. Called the Campaign for the Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA), the programme lent strong support to existing strategies and plans.

Within three years of CARMMA's initiation, 37 of the 54 countries in Africa had taken steps to upgrade national maternal health programmes and services. About 30 have made political commitments, such as setting aside funds for maternal health. Rwanda now offers financial incentives to high-performing health facilities.

CARMMA urged African countries to put together "a roadmap for maternal and new-born health," Dr. Wilfred Ochan, a UNFPA assistant representative, told *Africa Renewal*. Uganda and Kenya, for instance, focus on training midwives, improving ambulance response times, enhancing community mobilization, reducing the number of still births and increased the use of family planning programmes.

High fees for childbirth services and hospital stays, little or no access to nearby health facilities and shortages of health workers are some of the factors affecting maternal health, explains the World Health Organization (WHO).

Ms. Addico cites the poor quality of Africa's health systems. Mothers who make it to a hospital may have to wait long hours to see a doctor. Facilities often do not have

adequate resources – either equipment or staff – to help mothers deliver.

WHO also reports that women, especially young prospective mothers, may not be fully aware of the health risks when they are about to deliver. Pregnant young women who gave birth between ages of 15 and 20 are twice as likely to die during childbirth as women in their 20s or older. Girls under the age of 15 are five times more likely to die during childbirth.

Religious barriers have posed challenges, Ms. Addico agrees. Some health facilities run by religious groups, for example, may not offer family planning options or other alternatives they disagree with.

The East African Community is however making sure that women who go to a religious hospital are also taken to an alternative healthcare facility. In addition, Ms. Addico points out that "We tend to forget that women with HIV have maternal and reproductive needs because of the [AIDS] stigma."

Despite gains in maternal health, Mr. Akinyere Eric Dairo, a senior programme and technical advisor to the UNFPA, told *Africa Renewal* that there is still "a very urgent need to keep intensifying maternal health interventions." According to UNFPA, only six countries (Rwanda, Botswana, Niger, Malawi, Zambia and Burkina Faso) have met the target of allocating at least 15 per cent of their annual budget to health, a goal set at an African summit on HIV/AIDS held in Abuja, Nigeria, in 2000.

Moreover, Mr. Dairo adds, many of the countries that reached the 15 per cent goal did so "due to contributions from external donors to the health sector." He proposes that African countries consistently set aside money from their own budgets for health care, "especially when it comes caring for women and children."

ICC stretched to its limits in Africa

By Jocelyne Sambira

Congolese rebel Bosco Ntaganda is the latest African to appear before the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. Mr. Ntaganda faces several counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity including the rape, murder, sexual slavery and recruitment of children in the North Kivu province in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, according to ICC's records.

The ICC is an independent, permanent court that investigates and prosecutes persons accused of the most serious crimes of international concern, namely genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Mr. Ntaganda follows in the footsteps of Thomas Lubanga, another Congolese warlord who was recently sentenced to 14 years in jail by the Tribunal for recruiting and using child soldiers in his rebel army between 2002 and 2003. So far, 30 people have been indicted, all of them Africans, leading to accusations that the court has been going after Africans.

The DRC is one of the seven situations under investigation by the ICC. The others are northern Uganda, the Darfur region of Sudan, the Central African Republic, Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire. The court is also examining claims of murder, mutilation and torture committed since January 2012 by insurgent groups in Mali.

Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, a national of Gambia, recently announced that she would not drop charges against Kenya's president-elect Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy, William Ruto. Before the elections, they appeared before the court to answer charges of complicity in the violence that erupted following the 2007 elections.

Analysts believe the cash strapped court is stretched to its limit trying to deal simultaneously with several cases from different countries. It has also been criticized for using intermediaries to conduct investigations, allegedly undermining its credibility and its ability to build strong cases.

Bosco Ntaganda during his initial appearance before the International Criminal Court. ICC-CPI

QUOTABLES

UN Photo/Cristina Silveiro

I have to speak for them. I have to make sure that their stories are told. I have to be able to make sure that they have the opportunity to rebuild their lives...

Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

Half of the African people are younger than 19 years old. That is a huge bulge really in our population... And this can either be a blessing or a curse. It's time to really listen to young people to really understand what they want instead of us always telling them what they should do

Mo Ibrahim, billionaire philanthropist

In 2015, 61% of Africans will be under 25; by 2035 this fraction will only have fallen to 56%: this represents a huge growth opportunity as these young populations enter their productive years

Mahktar Diop, World Bank Vice-President

In terms of the poverty and being disconnected, it's not because people are stupid or not creative, they just didn't have a chance, they weren't at the table

Herman Chinery-Hesse, Ghanian software pioneer

Drugs on sale at a market in Mali. Bert Spiertz/Hollandse Hoogte/Redux

Counterfeit drugs raise Africa's temperature

Profits too high, penalties too low to stop crime

By **Jocelyne Sambira**

For someone with advanced technical know-how and a devious mind, a piece of chalk or some flour or starch can be shaped into a tablet or pill. With the naked eye, it's almost impossible to tell it's a copycat. Labelling and packaging are often imitated to perfection. The global counterfeit drug trade, a billion-dollar industry, is thriving in Africa. The markets are flooded with fake and poor-quality drugs, making a trip to the pharmacy seem like a game of Russian roulette. If you pick the wrong box, it could literally mean your death.

About 100,000 deaths a year in Africa are linked to the counterfeit drug trade, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The British think-tank, International Policy Network, estimates that globally, 700,000 deaths a year are caused by fake malaria and tuberculosis drugs—comparing the death toll to the equivalent of "four fully laden jumbo jets crashing everyday."

The WHO defines counterfeit medicine as "one which is deliberately and fraudulently mislabelled with respect to identity and/or source." Both branded and generic products are faked. In some parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America, more than 30% of the medicines on sale can be fake, notes the organization.

The detection of fakes has become more difficult over the years, notes a 2012 study published by the *Lancet*, because of "counterfeiters' increased ability to reproduce holograms and other sophisticated printing techniques." Some even add active ingredients that pass quality test controls but don't provide any benefit to the user.

Roger Bate, an economist specialising in international health policies, believes that substandard drugs—the result of poor manufacturing or "deliberate corner-cutting"—are a much bigger health problem than fake medicines. "Off-the-shelf drugs made by Chinese and to a lesser extent, Indian manufacturers tend to perform inconsistently on quality tests," he claims in an article for the US-based think tank American Enterprise Institute (AEI).

Bate also blames "bad" drugs for the rise in drug-resistant strains of diseases like tuberculosis. For his most recent study, published in the *International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease*, over 700 samples of two main first-line anti-tuberculosis medicines were picked randomly for testing from private sector pharmacies. The study found that overall, 9.1% of sample drugs worldwide tested failed basic quality control tests. The failure rate in Africa was 16.6%, about one in every six pills.

Meanwhile, Ashifi Gogo, the chief executive officer of Sproxil, a brand protection company for emerging markets, argues that "it isn't just a problem of counterfeit medicines produced in the East and shipped over to Africa." Speaking to

AllAfrica.com, a news portal, he suggested that the rise of African manufacturers is also contributing to the problem of substandard medicines in the markets.

Crime against humanity

The proliferation of fake, falsified and substandard drugs has had tragic consequences. "Counterfeiting is more than a criminal act," writes Professor Pierre Ambroise-Thomas, the WHO expert on malaria and tropical parasitic diseases, in the *Mediterranean Journal of Haematology and Infectious Diseases*. "Manslaughter is perfectly justified to describe such an act although some prefer calling it simply murder."

Unfortunately, the penalties for the crime are not strong enough to deter criminals, lead researchers Gaurvika Nayyar and Joel Breman emphasize in a June 2012 report on poor-quality drugs published in the *Lancet Infectious Diseases*. For example, a 2009 raid in Uganda, conducted by Interpol and the WHO-supported group IMPACT (International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Taskforce), discovered five tonnes of fake drugs in the central and eastern districts of the country.

In an AEI report, *The Deadly World of Fake Drugs*, Fred Kiyaga, who at the time was head of Interpol Uganda, said only five people were convicted and each was fined just $520. Nayyar and Breman strongly advocate that the "production and distribution of counterfeit anti-malarial drugs should be prosecuted as crimes against humanity."

Weak regulations and drug licensing

A major sweep across 16 seaports on the east and west coasts of Africa last July allowed the World Customs Organization, an intergovernmental organization that advises customs administrations worldwide, to seize more than 82 million doses of illicit medicines estimated to be worth over $40 million. The fake drugs found during the raid included cough syrup, anti-parasitic and anti-malarial drugs, antibiotics and even contraceptives.

However, the raid also exposed the Achilles' heel of African government agencies in charge of licensing and regulating drugs. Lack of training, insufficient manpower and corruption often plague national regulatory agencies.

Geographic distribution of pharmaceutical crime incidents

Number of reported incidents in 2011

It is important to note that the regions that are more frequently linked to incidents are not necessarily those with weak enforcement and inspection programs. Rather, countries in these regions are effectively identifying pharmaceutical crime through law enforcement activity and inspections by drug regulatory agencies. Many countries in regions with high incident totals are quite transparent in government operations and their activities are known to the media and public.

Those regions with seemingly low incident totals are not necessarily unaffected by or at a lower risk of pharmaceutical crime. Due to competing law enforcement priorities, lack of funding or inadequate regulatory structures in certain regions of the world, counterfeit medicines often go undetected. It is important to recognize these facts, since they complicate region to region comparisons.

Furthermore, government inspectors frequently accept bribes and kick-backs to allow the fake drugs to pass borders.

The WHO is helping countries develop the expertise needed to regulate drugs. Drug registration, also called marketing authorization or product licensing, is a thorough evaluation to ensure a drug is safe for consumption.

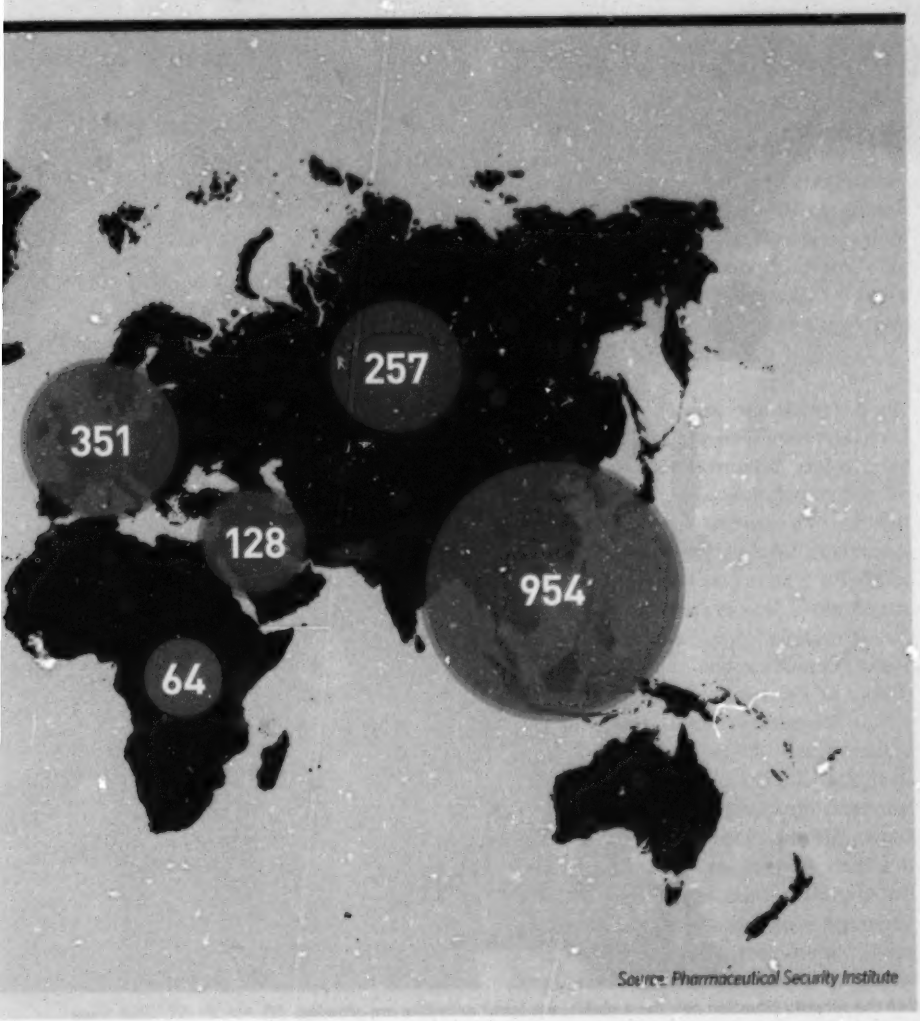
Manufacturing, storage and distribution must also follow strict guidelines. Without registration, the drugs cannot be marketed.

To fast-track registration, the WHO encourages national regulatory authorities to choose medicines from its list of pre-qualified products. But it's up to the individual countries to decide to register a product or not.

Seloi Mogatle, Botswana's principal pharmacist in drugs registration, told the WHO she appreciates "the opportunity to use the agency's work without losing national autonomy." But for Bate, AEI's resident scholar, it's not enough. He told business and technology journalist Eric Palmer in the publication *FiercePharma Manufacturing* that "companies making drugs for WHO programs in Africa are manufacturing substandard products." To remedy that, he recommends that "WHO institute a three-strikes-and-you-are-out rule" for companies making low-quality drugs.

High drug prices

Another major weakness of the regulatory agencies is their inability to close what Olike Chinwendu, in her thesis, "The Fight Against Fake Drugs by NAFDAC in Nigeria," calls the "chaotic drug market." This includes unlicensed



Source: Pharmaceutical Security Institute

drug vendors—most of them street, kiosk or open-market vendors.

Dora Akunyili, former director of NAFDAC (National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control), spent eight years trying to cripple the counterfeit industry in Nigeria. Having lost her sister to fake insulin, she saw it as more than a job. She fired corrupt officials, blacklisted over 30 manufacturers and led raids against open-air drug markets. Between 2001 and 2005, the proportion of fake drugs for sale went from 40% to 16.7%. The counterfeit industry viciously fought back, burning the agency's labs, attempting to kidnap her son and nearly killing her. Her convoy was shot at and a bullet grazed her temple.

But "seizing, destroying and penalizing violators" did not root out the fake drug trade, according to Chinwendu. She touts strategies used by Tanzania and Ghana to train, license and regulate illegal drug vendors rather than shut them out.

The cost of medicines is a determining factor for African consumers, since most pay for their medications out of pocket. Products sold in licensed pharmacies remain out of reach for many. A joint study by the WHO and Health Action International found that "duties, taxes, mark-ups, distribution costs and dispensing fees are often high, regularly constituting between 30% to 40% of retail prices, but occasionally up to 80% or more of the total."

People will continue to patronize drug outlets like open drug markets for first-line treatments, observes Chinwendu, because they're cheaper.

SMS-protected drugs

While educating consumers has been crucial in fighting counterfeit medicines, regional coordination has also been an effective tool. Nigeria and Cameroon recently signed a cooperation agreement, promising to share experiences and technical expertise for the war against fake drugs.

In West Africa, health and law enforcement officials, together with the WHO and Interpol, have been running multi-country operations aimed at disrupting transnational fake drugs criminal networks. Their latest operation in 2011, called Cobra, resulted in the seizure of 170 tonnes of counterfeit and illicit medical products.

China, a global manufacturer of generic drugs and the maker of the award-winning anti-malarial drug, artemisinin, has also joined the fight. According to the Xinhua News Agency, China is installing "recognition and tracing technology on its drugs," and anti-counterfeit labels are sealed on each drug package. Chinese pharmaceutical companies are also strengthening cooperation with African governments and drug distributors to trace imported drugs.

New technology is also revolutionizing the fight against counterfeits in Africa. TruScan is a handheld spectrometer being used at airports and border posts to analyze the chemical composition of drugs, helping to spot "bad drugs" in seconds.

In addition, simple and free text messages are being used to check the authenticity of drugs. Start-ups like mPedigree Network and Sproxil have designed systems that allow legitimate drug manufacturers to label their packages with an encrypted code. Consumers simply scratch off the label on the package and text the code for free to the company that maintains the system. The response, sent by text, is instant, informing the consumer whether the drug is real.

Countries like Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya have integrated mobile telephony–based consumer verification into their safety regulations. The system is also being replicated in Asia. The brilliance of the service is that it allows consumers to protect themselves, giving them the power. But more importantly, the low-tech innovation is helping restore the public's trust in the health sector.

Busy market-place in Mogadishu, Somalia's capital. With the security situation now more stable, economic activities are growing. AU-UN IST/Tobin Jones

Somali diaspora's remittances cast a lifeline

Interview with a money transfer chief executive

During two decades of conflict, famines and floods, money sent back home by Somali expatriates — known as remittances — has been instrumental in keeping Somalia afloat. The UN Development Programme estimates that $1.6 billion in remittances is sent back annually by Somali emigrants living in North America and Europe. Abdirashid Duale, a Somali who is chief executive of Dahabshiil, one of the largest money-transfer businesses in Africa, says that such transfers have been "a lifeline" for Somalis.

Now that security has improved in Mogadishu after the ouster of Al Shabaab Islamist militants in October 2012, he believes that strong economic growth can help drive peace. He shared with *Africa Renewal*'s Jocelyne Sambira his hopes for a "business-friendly" administration.

Africa Renewal: How do you see the political situation in Mogadishu today?

Abdirashid Duale: The recent election, which was the first held in Mogadishu in more than 20 years, represents a great achievement. It's early days yet, and the new administration has a lot of issues to address. I am a businessman, not a politician, so it is not my role to talk about politics. I hope, however, that the new government will be business-friendly.

I believe that encouraging the Somali business community, which is extremely dynamic, will enhance peace and development. The diaspora, as the primary source of funding for Somali enterprise, will of course play an important role. Remittance finance, the majority of which comes through Dahabshiil, accounts for a large proportion of start-up capital in the Somali territories and has enabled the private sector to be the great survivor of the last two decades.

Security has improved in the capital, Mogadishu, and the city of Kismayo is now in the hands of the government. What do you think will help stabilize the country?

There are still many challenges ahead. Addressing them will take time. However, I am sure development and job creation will help, as economic improvement plays such a key role in enhancing and cementing peace and stability. The business community, which is in so many ways a Somali success story, can help stabilize the situation. Dahabshiil, for example, works all over the Somali territories. It employs thousands of Somali people regardless of their clan or regional affiliations. We also apply this unifying approach to our customers, as we serve all Somalis, no matter where they come from.

As a businessman, what are your expectations of the new government?

I am always optimistic, and I hope the recent changes will improve life for all Somalis. I hope the new government will introduce policies that encourage the private sector. I also hope it will focus on the new generation and listen to the ideas of the youth. It will be important to encourage the growing number of people returning from the diaspora to invest and stay in the Somali territories.

Many members of the diaspora are returning with useful skills, but it is also important to train people locally. The new government should work hard to encourage not only Somali but also foreign investment. Dahabshiil continues to set an example by being fully compliant with anti-money laundering and other regulations, both locally and internationally.

Somalia relies heavily on remittances to survive. Will this continue for long, or do you expect other investments to flow in?

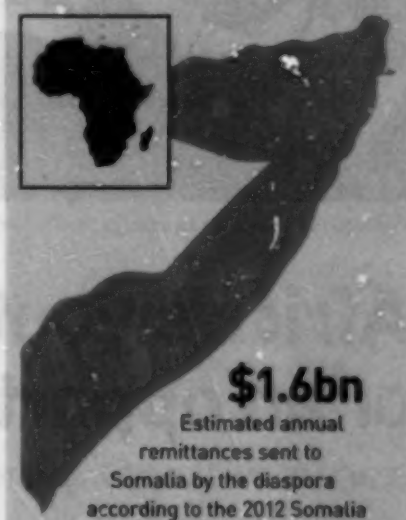
Remittances remain a lifeline for many Somalis. They help Somalis in many different ways. Somalis are by nature entrepreneurial, which explains the recent increase in investment in Mogadishu and other parts of Somali territories. I expect this trend to continue. As long as there is peace, people will keep on coming back to their homeland. Remittances are set to keep flowing, as are other investments.

Dahabshiil has noticed that remittances still flow into the other African countries in which we operate, including South Sudan, Rwanda and Uganda. Remittances play a crucial part in the development of many of the 150 countries we operate in. They are part of the global economy. They are part of life, not only in the Somali territories, but in many other parts of the world.

You travel to Mogadishu. What is the situation like now?

Security has been improving in Mogadishu. The humanitarian situation has improved for some Somalis, but many are still in desperate need. Dahabshiil works and will continue to work with international aid organizations. One of our most recent activities was the donation of more than $100,000 for flood-stricken communities in the Beledwein region.

Somalia at a glance



$1.6bn
Estimated annual remittances sent to Somalia by the diaspora according to the 2012 Somalia Human Development Report

9.6mn
2011 population estimate

42%
Estimated Somali population between the ages of 14 and 29

67%
Estimated unemployment rate for Somali youth

Source: United Nations Development Programme/Africa Development Bank

Africa has the youngest population in the world. This could be a huge asset, an opportunity to mobilize this reservoir of human capacity towards the economic revival of the continent. Alternatively, it could be a source of instability if Africa's leaders do not address the concerns of its young people. In this special series, *Africa Renewal* looks at the key issues confronting Africa's youth.

Graduation ceremony at a secondary school in Tanzania. Jonathan Kalan

Africa's youth: a "ticking time bomb" or an opportunity?

Leaders awakening to the need for job-creation programmes

By **Kingsley Ighobor**

Senegalese opposition politicians denounced the country's high unemployment rate to mobilize youth against former President Abdoulaye Wade in the country's 2012 presidential election. Joblessness was one of the main issues that drove the country's many young people into the streets and to the voting stations to press for a change of government. At least six people died in the protests, and President Wade was defeated by the current leader, Macky Sall.

The key lesson from Senegal's election violence is that youth unemployment, which is 15 per cent in that country, can fuel the fire of political violence and civil unrest. A World Bank survey in 2011 showed that about 40% of those who join rebel movements say they are motivated by a lack of jobs.

Aware of this, African governments are confronting unemployment in many different ways. In Senegal, President Sall launched a programme in February 2013 to create 30,000 jobs by the end of the year and possibly 300,000 by 2017.

Growth without jobs

There is another reason to pay more attention to Africa's youth, many analysts believe. With 200 million people aged between 15 and 24 (the youth bracket), Africa has the youngest population in the world. The current trend indicates that this figure will double by 2045, according to the 2012 *African Economic Outlook* report prepared by experts from the African Development Bank (AfDB), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the

70%

Percentage of African youth living on less than US$2 per day

industrialized countries' Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), among others.

The story of Africa's worrisome youth unemployment is often told alongside the story of the continent's fast and steady economic growth. While six of the 10 fastest-growing economies in the world are in sub-Saharan Africa, the unemployment rate for that region is 6%, according to the AfDB. Compared to the world average of about 5%, its rate may not seem that high. But the problem is that in most African countries, youth unemployment "occurs at a rate more than twice that for adults," notes the AfDB.

Youth account for 60% of all African unemployed, according to the World Bank. In North Africa, the youth unemployment rate is an eyebrow-raising 30%. It is even worse in Botswana, the Republic of the Congo, Senegal, South Africa and several other countries.

Young women feel the sting of unemployment even more sharply. The AfDB found that in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa and all of those in North Africa, it is easier for men to get jobs than it is for women, even if they have equivalent skills and experience.

Masked reality

Africa's unemployment statistics exclude those in vulnerable employment and those who are underemployed in informal sectors. "Young people [in Africa] find work, but not in places that pay good wages, develop skills or provide a measure of job security," reports the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based public policy organization that conducts independent research. More than 70% of the youth in the "Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal and Uganda are either self-employed or contributing to family work," adds the report.

Gabriel Benjamin, a jobless university graduate in Lagos, Nigeria, says that it is common to find young Nigerian university graduates doing menial jobs. "They clean floors in hotels, sell recharge [mobile telephone calling] cards — some even work in factories as labourers." The Brookings Institution considers underemployment a problem serious enough to warrant greater attention, since it masks the reality in countries that post low unemployment rates.

Simply put, underemployment is not a solution to poverty, concurs the International Labour Organization (ILO), which reports that up to 82% of African workers are "working poor." According to the *African Economic Outlook*, on average, more than 70% of Africa's youth live on less than US$2 per day, the internationally defined poverty threshold.

Ticking time bomb

"This is an unacceptable reality on a continent with such an impressive pool of youth, talent and creativity," stresses Mthuli Ncube, chief economist at the AfDB. Alexander Chikwanda, Zambia's finance minister, puts it succinctly: "Youth unemployment is a ticking time bomb," which now appears to be perilously close to exploding.

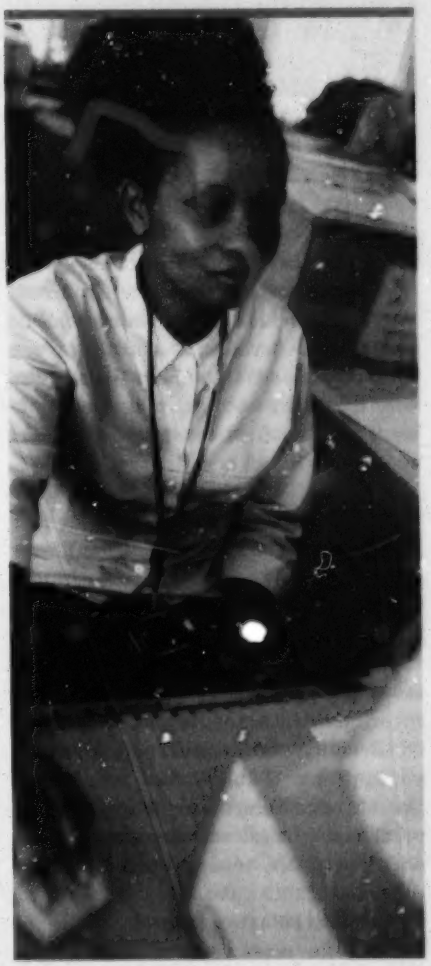
Mr. Chikwanda's analogy draws attention to the consequences of high youth unemployment in a continent where about 10 million to 12 million young people join the labour market each year. "As events in North Africa [the Arab Spring] have shown, lack of employment opportunities ... can undermine social cohesion and political stability," warns the AfDB. Ahmad Salkida, a Nigerian journalist who has had rare access to the militant group Boko Haram, told *Africa Renewal* that although the sect is mainly driven by ideology, pervasive unemployment in northern Nigeria makes for easy recruitment of jobless young people.

African leaders intervene

African leaders met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2009 to try to defuse the youth unemployment time bomb. They declared 2009–18 the "African Youth Decade" and resolved to mobilize resources, including from the private sector for youth development. Their plan of action emphasized the need to address both unemployment and underemployment. Two years later, meeting in Equatorial Guinea, they once more promised the "creation of safe, decent and competitive employment opportunities for young people."

African governments have made some efforts to match words with action. Ghana created national youth service and empowerment programmes to equip college graduates with requisite skills and help them find jobs. Mauritius developed a plan to encourage technical and vocational education for young people. Zambia introduced a national youth policy and a youth enterprise fund to stimulate job creation. The Nigerian government introduced a skills acquisition and enterprise development programme as a component of the existing national youth service corps; it also introduced a business plan competition, dubbed YouWin, which grants winners start-up financing.

The jury is still out as to how much of an impact such national initiatives have had on youth unemployment. Mr. Ncube warns against high expectations. There are "no quick fixes," he advises,



Staff at work at a bank in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. *Panos/Mikkel Ostergaard*

> Africa's growing youth population comes with high energy, creativity, and talents which are key to future prosperity

and recommends "stronger job-creation mechanisms." Singing the same tune, the World Bank proposes a jobs strategy that pays more attention to rural development, invests in agriculture, is sensitive to the migration of youth to urban areas and prepares them for the contemporary labour market.

The influx of young people into Africa's urban areas worsens unemployment there. They are looking for jobs in populous cities such as Lagos, Ibadan, Cairo, Nairobi and Johannesburg. With briefcases loaded with job applications, they move from office to office in search of jobs — any jobs — to keep body and soul together. They often confront obstacles, including discrimination due to their inexperience, according to the *African Economic Outlook*. Even those who are lucky enough to find employment are the first to be laid off when economic growth derails.

No shortage of ideas

There have been other ideas about how to create jobs. The Brookings Institution argues for a focus on manufacturing, because it is "the industrial sector most closely associated with employment-intensive growth." It also urges more investment in agriculture, tourism and construction and in projects that employ young people. "Public works programmes provide opportunities for young workers, particularly rural residents and people with low skills, to acquire initial work experience."

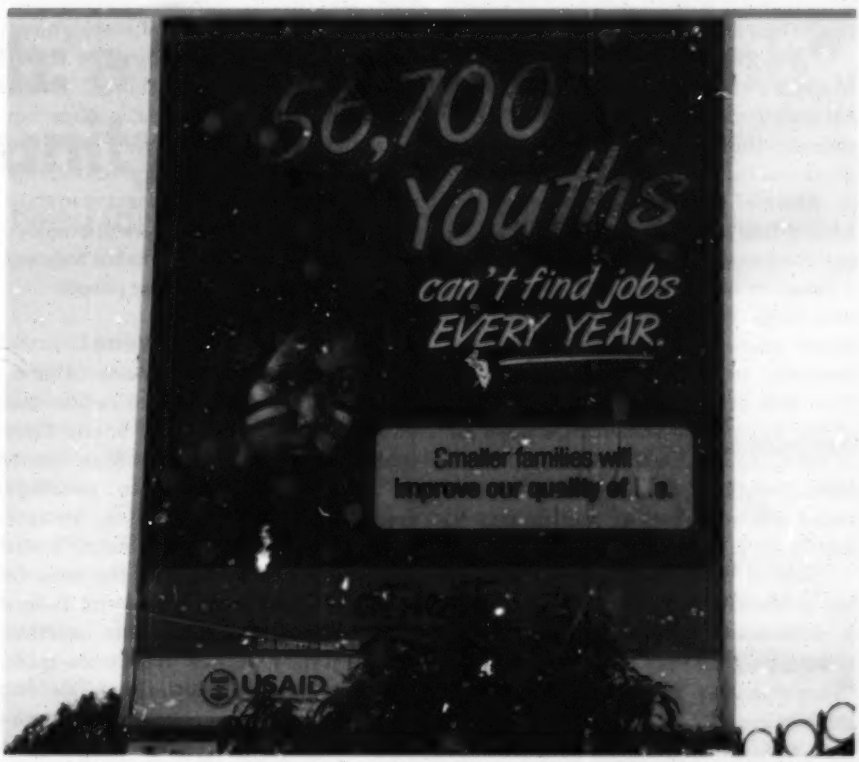
The UNDP also lends its voice to the call for more investments in agriculture. In its first-ever Africa Human Development Report, released in May 2012, it argued that a situation in which African governments spend more money on the military than on agriculture is unsustainable.

Currently, foreign direct investments in Africa mainly target mining and minerals, sectors that produce few jobs, according to the ECA. The OECD warns that natural resource–based economies such as "oil exporters Nigeria and Algeria, gold producers including South Africa and copper exporter Zambia" therefore need to diversify into other activities or "be susceptible if the bubble bursts."

In February 2013, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan stated on his Facebook page that the country was already diversifying its economy. He was trumpeting the decision by General Electric to invest $1 billion in power generation and oil production in the country. "This will provide jobs for thousands with multiplier effect for tens of thousands," President Jonathan wrote. Last year US-based Walmart, the world's largest retailer, invested $2.4 billion in South Africa's major retailer, Massmart Holdings, in what has been cited as an example of the kind of jobs-generating investment Africa needs.

Most analysts also agree on the need to revise Africa's education curricula to include skills and enterprise development. The Brookings Institution proposes an urgent focus on post-primary education, although African leaders appear to be more concerned about meeting the Millennium Development Goal of universal primary education by 2015. Even so, many consider as valid the Brookings Institution's point that there is a "mismatch between the skills of young [African] workers and those needed by employers."

Despite current challenges, there is a sliver of good news: Africa's growing youth population comes with high energy, creativity and talents, which are "also the key to future prosperity," notes the *African Economic Outlook*. It now depends on whether African governments can grab the unemployment bull by the horns.



A billboard sponsored by US Aid suggesting a solution for youth unemployment would be limiting family size. *Panos/Jenny Matthews*

A young man uses a sewing machine during vocational training for street children in Ethiopia. Panos/Robin Hammond

AFRICA'S YOUTH

Youth unemployment: lessons from Ethiopia

By **Andualem Sisay**

In Hawassa City in southern Ethiopia, 250 kilometres from the capital Addis Ababa, 24-year-old Mitike Paulos, her younger sister and three friends are busy producing leather bags and belts for sale. Mitike and her sister learned the craft from their brother, who teaches at the government-run Leather Industry Development Institute in Addis Ababa. They started business in 2011 with a 35,000-birr ($2,000) loan from a small-loan lender. Today their business employs 10 people and as they plan to expand production, they also hope to hire more workers. "The more we work, the more we grow," says Mitike.

The Ethiopian government is encouraging young people to start small businesses in order to reduce the rate of youth unemployment, officially estimated at more than 50%. With 90 million people, the country is the second most populous in Africa, producing over 150,000 graduates each year. The government now wants to channel skilled labour into the massive-scale construction projects that have been springing up across the country in such areas as hydropower, railway lines, roads, housing, water supply and irrigation.

Government's approaches

Young Ethiopians who want to become entrepreneurs are encouraged to organize themselves in groups in order to access microfinance. They are then trained by the state-run Federal Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agency in business start-up and management skills. The agency also gives financial support to youth starting small and medium-size enterprises in areas such as textiles, leather, agriculture, trading, wood and steel.

Abozenech Negash, the agency's public relations officer, says its focus is to address unemployment challenges, rev up the economic engine and ensure fairness in allocating national resources.

Improving youth employment

Ethiopia's ambitious five-year Growth and Transformation Plan (2010–2015), which includes developing industrial cluster zones and constructing 10,000 miles of road networks, is expected, upon completion, to reduce unemployment considerably. The plan also includes increasing power generation from its current level of 2,000 megawatts to 8,000 megawatts, and building a 1,500-mile standard-gauge rail line. These projects have already employed hundreds of thousands of young people and further recruitments are ongoing, according to officials.

Official data shows that in both formal

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Ahmad Alhendawi. Africa Renewal/Bo Li

AFRICA'S YOUTH

Africa's greatest assets are its young people

— Ahmad Alhendawi, UN youth envoy

Ahmad Alhendawi was appointed in January as the UN Secretary-General's envoy on youth who will be the voice of young people all over the world. In his Five-Year Agenda, the Secretary-General recognized "working with and for women and young people" as one of his priorities. At 29, Mr. Alhendawi already has a rich background as a youth advocate and activist. Before joining the UN he served as a youth policy advisor for the World Bank-funded programme on institutional development in the Arab League, with headquarters in Cairo, Egypt. He had also been a team leader for a youth project in Iraq and worked with the UN Population Fund and many other organizations and governments on youth issues. In this interview with *Africa Renewal*'s Kingsley Ighobor on Mr. Alhendawi's second day in office, the youth envoy talks about his new role, his hopes for young people in Africa and the rest of the world, and his hobbies.

Africa Renewal: You have just been appointed the Secretary-General's envoy on youth. What will be your role?

Ahmad Alhendawi: An envoy is someone who takes a message and promotes it. To be the Secretary-General's envoy requires taking his message and promoting it among the youth around the world, to allow them to better understand what the UN does. But it's not a PR [public relations] job. It's also about the youth's involvement in the work of the UN. It's a two-way communication. It's creating momentum for youth issues at the international level; trying to harmonise the work of the different UN agencies to deliver as one at the national level; to work with youth organizations, bringing them more visibility and having them recognised as partners.

What key messages are you taking from the Secretary-General [SG] to the youth?

I think it's very clear what the SG wants. He has outlined priority areas to focus on: employment, education, human rights, citizenship, political inclusion, entrepreneurship—all are highlighted in the SG's plan of action for his second term.

How do you intend to deliver these messages?

By deploying all the methods we can deploy. Remember that the UN does not lack mechanisms to deliver these messages. There are programmes and entities that are doing great work already. I will just add my bit and repackage their work in a way that will be more readable and understandable to the youth. Yes, conferences, workshops, by using the social media and so on. I am now consulting the agencies and young people to try to find out what else we can do.

What would you like to achieve by the time your assignment is over?

We are in a world that is very young. The most youthful societies are in developing countries. This gives us an extra challenge and opportunity to help in their development efforts. My big success will be to promote the World Programme of Action for Youth. This programme was created in 1995 by the General Assembly and defines 15 priority areas to guide the work of member states and

UN agencies for youth. In this context, Mr. Ban Ki-moon highlighted five areas - employment, entrepreneurship, education including sexual and reproductive health, political inclusion, citizenship and protection of rights - to accelerate the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth. Moreover I would like to bring youth issues to the centre of development agenda and promote the role of youth as equal partners in developing their societies.

Africa has the youngest population in the world, and unemployment among the youth is high. How concerned are you about this?

I would like to look at it in a different way. Just look at the young people who were born in 2000, when MDGs [Millennium Development Goals] were formulated. From 2000 to today, literacy rates have increased in Africa from 58% to 66.6% for young girls, from 72% to 78% for boys. This generation has witnessed improvements in health and in enrolment in schools. If we continue with this trend, the hope is that post-MDGs will continue to serve African youth. So we are on the right track. Today I checked with MY World [the UN global survey for a better world] data to see what African youth are saying. The first priority for them is solid education; of course the survey is ongoing. The second priority is better access to health-care systems.

> "I think Africa is about to find the right formula for dealing with youth unemployment

You will agree that when people get educated they expect to get jobs.

Youth employment is definitely important. There have to be multi-sectoral partnerships. It has to be collective efforts involving governments, private sector, civil society and others. I think Africa is about to find the right formula for dealing with youth unemployment.

What is the right formula?

I am seeing developments happening since 2000 to today. I am not underestimating the challenges. We also have very good lessons learned. We need to think strategically and critically so that the post-MDGs development agenda meets the demands of African youth and youth around the world.

In developing the post-MDGs development framework, what level of youth participation do you expect?

Youth participation is extremely important. I will tell you why. Times and the world have changed dramatically since the MDGs were formulated a decade ago. You cannot do the same development agenda the way we did it in the nineties. Now we have a different world where civil societies are stronger and youth are demanding more participation. We spent the last years asking youth and civil societies to catch up with the MDGs; now they have an opportunity to set a new development agenda. Participation leads to ownership. High-level panels, thematic consultations, MY World 2015, all these consultations are happening to reflect the views of the youth.

How would you assess the current level of young people's involvement in politics in Africa?

If the largest voting population are young people, then they have to get involved in politics. First you have to promote an enabling environment. You need to have youth-friendly laws that promote human rights, youth rights. The legal frameworks have to support youth participation. We have to look at mechanisms for youth participation in politics. It's not just about political parties and government; it's about local councils, about municipalities, about all the different levels of government. When young people can influence daily policy decisions at all levels, that's a great example. We need to provide funding for African youth who can take initiatives to engage in civil society and politics.

You lived in Egypt so you must be familiar with the Arab Spring. What lessons can the youth, and even the political elites, learn from that experience?

That our governments should be cautious and understand that young people should be engaged in politics. When they are frustrated and marginalized, they will have a sense of hopelessness and become difficult to deal with. The challenge is to move them from the protest mind-set to the political mind-set.

You are very active on social media. What would be your advice on the responsible use of social media?

I am hesitant to provide any advice on how people can use the social media because social media reflects what happens in real life. If you do not have healthy dialogues in the society, that will be reflected in the social media. From the Arab Spring, we can see that social media have transformative powers.

Would you rather have young people use social media to effect positive social change?

I see this happening. Young people have great ability to filter ideas and correct anomalies. The use of the social media is positive, for me. However, I want to see social media connecting people from Africa with those in Asia, Europe, Middle East, etc. This is not happening a lot. If we promote structural initiatives between lawyers, entrepreneurs, others, it will help young people in different parts of the world. We are currently using it to evaluate MDGs and set a new development agenda.

How could we reach the hundreds of millions who have no access to the Internet, who are not active on social media platforms?

I think this is a very valid concern. This should encourage us to find ways to reach these people. That is why I say there must be consultations, for example having a focus group discussion is always important. Because it gives everyone the opportunity to speak freely at the table.

What's your message to young people around the world?

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African youth hungry for connectivity

More opportunities to innovate and create

By **Jonathan Kalan**

Inside TanzICT's innovation space. The Dar es Salaam hub, opened in 2011, was co-funded by Finland. Jonathan Kalan

In a tiny sweltering tin-roofed shack tucked inside one of Mogadishu's bullet-riddled neighbourhoods, two brothers, Ali Hassan and Mustafa Yare, sit hunched over one of eight humming desktop computers. Together they show Nasteexo Cadey, a young veiled student at Mogadishu University, how to set up her Facebook account, browse YouTube videos and check her e-mail.

For the past few months business has been growing at the brothers' Kobciye Internet Coffee, one of the several makeshift Internet cafés that have emerged in Mogadishu since the Islamic militant group Al-Shabaab fled the city.

"I wanted a business," Hassan says, "and this is something that I'm good at. I have skills in computers and IT." With staggering unemployment and few opportunities for youth, any job is a good job, he says. The café costs around $600 a month to run, and the brothers manage to bring in around $1,000 from their 40 or so daily customers, mostly university students.

Although Somalia's Internet penetration still stands at just above 1% of the population – similar to Afghanistan's – demand in Mogadishu is growing rapidly. As in the rest of Africa, youth hungry for content, connectivity and change are driving the demand.

The rise of opportunity

For millions of unemployed yet tech-savvy youth across Africa, increased connectivity is bringing tremendous opportunities. By tapping into the continent's growing digital revolution, young entrepreneurs are using information and communications technology (ICT) to boost their own prospects.

"ICT brings tremendous opportunity" to Africa's youth, argues Ahmed Alfi, chief executive officer of Sawari Ventures, a venture capital firm in Egypt

90+

Number of hubs, labs, incubators and accelerators covering more than 20 African countries

that focuses on new technology. "With software development, there's nowhere else you'll start with a thousand dollars and end with a million. It's one of the few times in history those types of returns are available," he told *Africa Renewal*.

While an Internet café may not itself be a million-dollar business, what's created in it very well could be.

Over the past five years, fibre-optic cables and a backbone network to support them have connected the continent in unprecedented ways, slashing the cost of Internet access and opening up new markets for content, software, mobile phone apps and social media. From Somalia to Ghana, Dar es Salaam to Dakar, Cape Town to Cairo, Africa's youth are finding ways to use ICT to drive growth, build businesses and shape their futures.

Upwardly mobile market

To understand Africa's digital opportunity, one only has to look at the numbers: six out of the 10 fastest-growing economies are in sub-Saharan Africa. Africa is the second-biggest mobile market in the world – smartphones outsell computers four to one. Over the 18 months to February 2012, Facebook had a user growth rate of 165% in Africa, according to the blog ICTworks.

"By 2016, it is estimated that there will be one billion mobile phones in Africa," said Mark Casey, director of technology, media and telecoms at the financial consultancy firm Deloitte, in a recent report. "Mobile Internet usage in Africa is among the highest in the world. Significant opportunities exist here to use social media in business."

Ghana's tech boom

Five years ago, BusyInternet, West Africa's largest Internet provider, opened an Internet café in Ghana's capital, Accra. It had a lounge featuring 100 computers, and Ghanaians from all walks of life would pay about 50 cents an hour to use its high-speed connection. With Internet penetration in Ghana at about 10% in 2011, according to government statistics, BusyInternet was one of the few places young folks could go to get online.

Mac-Jordan Degadjor, 26, is one of Ghana's preeminent technology and social media bloggers and Ghana's first Internet Freedom Fellow. The fellowship is awarded by the US State Department to individuals who champion freedom of expression and assembly online. He remembers how this single space sparked a revolution in Ghana's tech scene. "BusyInternet opened a lot of doors for young people living in Ghana," he told *Africa Renewal*. "People came together. It became sort of a hub."

Many of Ghana's young tech entrepreneurs and bloggers used the space to learn – online and from each other – and to shape a young tech community. They held BarCamps (informal networking forums for young techies) and founded BloggingGhana, a community of bloggers with a passion for Ghanaian content.

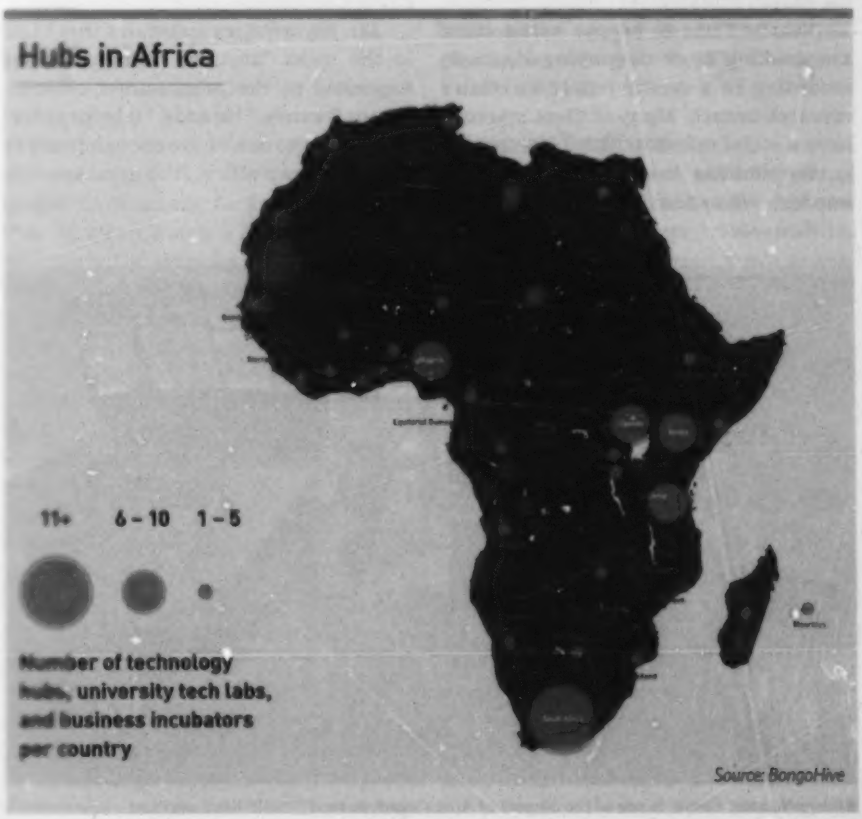
According to the US Embassy in Accra, which gave Degadjor the fellowship, these initiatives served to "inspire youth to get online wherever and however they can, making sure they have Ghanaian peers available to walk them through tech challenges."

By 2008 it was clear that Accra's vibrant young tech community needed more institutional development. This led to the founding of Meltwater Entrepreneurial School of Technology (MEST), which offers a two-year programme on training and mentoring for aspiring African software entrepreneurs. Successful companies have emerged from MEST, including NandiMobile, which provides mobile marketing and customer support for local businesses. Nearly all the entrepreneurs at MEST are in their mid-twenties.

Yet business is not the only thing emerging from Ghana's young tech scene. @GhanaDecides, a movement monitoring Ghana's elections via social media, received international acclaim during the run-up to Ghana's 2012 general election for fostering a better-informed electorate. It advocated free, fair and safe elections. It ran online election-related campaigns and provided offline social media training for youth groups, civil society organizations and public institutions.

Africa's 'hub boom'

BusyInternet's "hub" effect in spurring Ghana's tech-centric youth into action is not an isolated case. It reflects a


Hubs in Africa
11+
6 – 10
1 – 5
Number of technology hubs, university tech labs, and business incubators per country
Source: BongoHive

pan-African movement towards technology hubs that encourage the formation of communities and empower young developers and entrepreneurs.

Erik Hersman — co-founder of software company Ushahidi and of Nairobi's iHub, one of the best-known hubs in Africa — claims that the continent is undergoing a "tech-hub boom." There are now more than 90 hubs, labs, incubators and accelerators in Africa, covering more than 20 countries. According to recent research, African hubs are springing up at the rate of nearly one every two weeks.

"The tech hubs in Africa provide a home for those with new and innovative ideas, create an atmosphere where they are encouraged to try new things and, most importantly, are able to meet like-minded individuals they can grow with," says Mr. Hersman.

iHub emerged from the success of Ushahidi's software platform used to capture and monitor citizen reporting during Kenya's post-election violence in 2008. Started in 2010, iHub now has over eight thousand members spread across the world, with dozens of people using the space regularly.

Nearly 75% of people using iHub are working in or developing startups, according to a recent report by iHub's research branch. Many of these startups have a social mission, like eLimu, which is distributing e-learning tablets to improve education in Kenya's primary schools under a pilot project. Others, such as Niko Hapa, a location-based loyalty card for businesses accessed through a mobile phone, are purely market-driven.

A space to 'try and fail'

A thousand kilometres away in Kigali, Rwanda, a new government-sponsored ICT hub called kLab also targets young software developers and recent college graduates, offering them a place to gain practical experience and training and to work collaboratively.

Rwanda, a small, poor, landlocked country, is striving to build a knowledge-based economy. It has put ICT development at the centre of its Vision 2020 — President Paul Kagame's plan to turn Rwanda into a middle-income country by 2020. In line with that vision, the youth are to lead the charge.

Jean Niyotwagira, a young Rwandan and one of kLab's first "tenants," who graduated with skills in computer engineering last year, has already founded several software companies. These include a mobile applications development company, a social networking platform company and a digital supply-chain management platform company.

Mr. Niyotwagira maintains that kLab is the most "amazing thing that has happened to the programmer community in Rwanda." He adds, "It helps entrepreneurs who don't have enough funds to start their own office. It's a great space to try and fail."

iHub in Nairobi, Kenya, is one of the biggest of Africa's tech hubs. Jonathan Kalan

An ability to "try and fail" is a key advantage. In the past, failure usually meant economic disaster for young entrepreneurs, but now these hubs provide crucial support that enable entrepreneurs to take more risks, and either reap the rewards or start over again.

A need for investment

While bustling hubs packed with fresh ideas and idealistic entrepreneurs exist across the continent, one thing does not — investment. Many entrepreneurs struggle to get their companies past the initial seed-funding stage, since few local investors seem willing to take risks on technology ventures with potential for high profits.

"We need more tech-savvy investors," Mbwana Alliy, a former Silicon Valley entrepreneur who now manages the Savannah Fund, a Nairobi-based investment fund specialising in high-growth technology, told *Africa Renewal*.

But the blame lies not just with investors. It also lies with the entrepreneurs themselves. Mr. Alliy complains that many young entrepreneurs are "unfocused" and "lack discipline." They may be great developers, but they do not have the skills to build and manage a company.

This, many claim, is invariably a result of the education system. However, "ICT is one of the few areas where you can supplement your academic education online," says Mr. Alfi of Sawari Ventures. "You can bring yourself up to world class through online training. You can't do that with medicine."

Although people can learn software-coding skills online quite easily, learning the ins and outs of business management and finance is not so easy — in this, Africa still faces an enormous talent deficit. Many hubs are now turning their attention to helping entrepreneurs build such essential skills.

Despite the challenges, youth across the continent are getting connected and creating opportunities for themselves. Whether it's safely inside Africa's hubs or along the bullet-pocked streets of Mogadishu, they are finding ways to use technology to innovate, create employment and improve the societies in which they live.

Group of students at a university in Johannesburg, South Africa. Africa Media Online/Antony Kaminju

AFRICA'S YOUTH

Africa's mobile youth drive change

Cell phones reshape youth cultures

By **Jocelyne Sambira**

The sight of teenagers selling mushrooms using mobile phones is becoming a familiar one in rural Namibia. Namibia Polytechnic faculty member Maurice Nkusi, designer of a cell phone–based curriculum, told the *TechDailyNews* that most of these children have never even used a computer. But the rapidity with which they master new technology reflects the era in which they are living.

This is the first generation to have direct access to high technology. Cell phones today are nearly ubiquitous in African society. Teenagers and young adults are obsessed by them, carrying them around everywhere.

The World Bank and African Development Bank report there are 650 million mobile users in Africa, surpassing the number in the United States or Europe. In some African countries more people have access to a mobile phone than to clean water, a bank account or electricity, the agencies add.

The main catalyst for this explosive growth is the youth, Sudanese-born billionaire philanthropist Mohamed "Mo" Ibrahim told *Black Money*, an online business magazine. The former telecoms tycoon had over 20 million subscribers in Africa when he sold his company, Celtel, for $3.4 billion in 2005.

Mobile technology has been a game changer for Africa. Youth, whom the United Nations defines as those aged 15 to 24, are seizing the momentum and rewriting society's rules at the same time.

Mobile lifestyle

Teresa Clarke, the chief executive officer of Africa.com, a news website, told *Black Enterprise* magazine that for many Africans "the cell phone is their landline, ATM and email in one device. Cell phones are central to life."

Youth are using mobile phones for everything: communicating, listening to the radio, transferring money, shopping, mingling on social media and more. Furthermore, the industry has transcended divides between urban and rural, rich and poor.

Cheap Chinese handsets are readily available, with some going for as little as $20. Africa has a history of inflating taxes for mobile consumers and operators, but countries like Kenya, recognizing that handset prices represent a barrier to development, removed their 16% general sales tax in 2009, increasing sales by more than 200%, the *Global Mobile Tax Review* reports.

Mobile phone penetration in Africa has therefore increased rapidly in the past 12 years, going from 1% in 2000 to 54% in 2012, as stated in Deloitte's report *The Sub-Saharan Africa Mobile Observatory*.

Young people are the largest group using cell phones and their software applications, says Simthandile Mgushelo on his blog *Voices of the World*. In his country, South Africa, 72% of those between the ages of 15 and 24 have cell phones, according to the UN Children's Fund, UNICEF.

"Beep me" culture

Of Africa's unemployed, 60% are young people, the International Labour Organization reports. Meanwhile, subscribers in sub-Saharan Africa pay an average of between $5 and $8 for their monthly cell phone expenses, in a region where, by World Bank estimates, most people live on less than $2 a day. People make huge sacrifices to recharge their phones, even skipping meals. But they are saving money in other ways.

The Praekelt Foundation, a non-profit organization that uses mobile technology to fight poverty, found that 95% of South African youth use prepaid or "pay-as-you-go" plans, with the remaining 5% being on long-term contracts. About 30 million "please call me" text messages, a free service tailored for low-income cell phone users requesting a call back from

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Tunisian youth demonstrate on Bourguiba Avenue in dowtown Tunis. Corbis/APImages/Samuel Aranda

AFRICA'S YOUTH

A seat at the table

African youth demand a say in decision making

By **Kingsley Ighobor**

Ask members of the African political elite, civil society activists or anyone else about the role of youth in national development and you will hear a lot of profound, if trite, catchphrases, such as "The youth are the future; they are the leaders of tomorrow." African leaders even declared 2009–18 the African Youth Decade. Before that, in 2006, they adopted the African Youth Charter, with one of the goals being to lure younger people into participating in political debates and decision-making processes.

But African youth are no longer enthusiastic about an occasional show of love. Now they want a real engagement with the political elites. They said so during a three-day youth conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in November 2012, when they met to discuss their participation in democracy.

Organized by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, the UN Development Programme and the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, a Sweden-based pro-democracy organization, youth representatives from across the continent resolved at the conference to prepare themselves for future leadership roles. While pinning hope on democracy's promise, they demanded meaningful dialogue with older leaders and called for "increased youth participation in governance."

Catalysts for social change

Just two years ago, during the Arab Spring, young people mobilized for human rights and justice, in the process toppling autocratic leaders in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. They have also taken part in more abhorrent activities, such as in the debilitating wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, post-election violence in Kenya and other types of conflict.

Such cases show that youth can make, strengthen or break a system. But if they have a choice, they would rather be catalysts for positive social change than agents of strife, writes Shari Bryan, vice-president of the National Democratic Institute (NDI), a US non-profit organization that promotes democracy.

Yet African youth do not always get a chance to make that choice, which stirs their deep anger. Simply put, if they cannot join the system, they may be tempted to destroy it. "Extreme outcomes of political violence have been found to be more associated with autocratic regimes where the youth may resort to violence as a consequence of exclusion from certain pathways to social mobility and engagement in the political process," argue Danielle Resnick and Daniela Casale in a research paper for Afrobarometer, an independent, non-partisan project that conducts public opinion surveys in Africa.

Chinua Akukwe, an Africa expert who teaches at George Washington University in Washington, DC, adds that without political participation, yourg people can easily be manipulated. "Unemployment

and exclusion from decision-making processes render them hopeless and desperate."

Strange bedfellows

Although African governments have created many plans and frameworks to foster their political inclusion, youth are grumbling loudly. Ms. Bryan explains in her paper that both younger and older members of the political elite understand they have to engage with each other, but that such engagement does not happen naturally. "It will require a facilitated, action-oriented approach that gives young people the skills to create projects that will allow them to introduce ideas and solutions directly into the political system," she writes.

Such action-oriented approaches have been tried before. In a paper published by UN University Press, Gregory Lavender recalls that past African leaders such as Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah and Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta tapped young people's creative energies while crafting economic, political and social transformation plans in the 1950s and 1960s. By the 1970s and 1980s, continues Mr. Lavender, many African countries had begun implementing structural adjustment austerity measures, which included sharp budget cuts in sectors that normally benefit young people, such as education, health and job creation. "There was therefore a breakdown of youth as a meaningful transition period to adulthood," he writes.

Wind at their backs

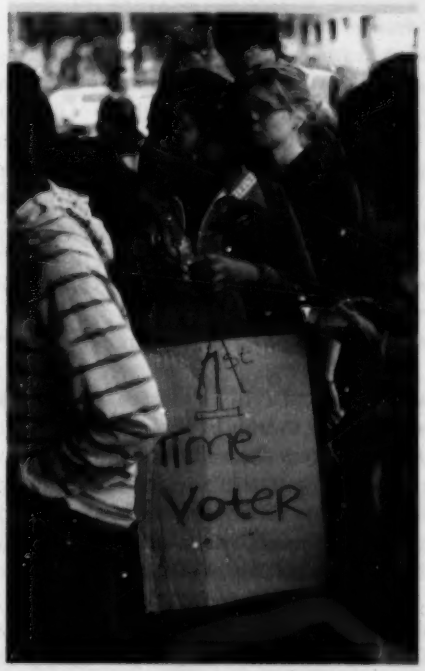
In recent years, however, African youth, like those in other parts of the world, have appeared to have the wind at their backs. Massive improvements in means of communication have enhanced their influence. In the past, African governments controlled most of the electronic media, giving them considerable leverage over public opinion, note Ms. Resnick and Ms. Casale. With the growing popularity of the Internet and the accelerating speed of communications, this influence has waned — some even believe it has been wiped out.

US president Barack Obama's 2008 election campaign, which was mostly led by young people, was an awakening. So was the Arab Spring, with young people organizing via Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms. During Kenya's 2008 elections they used technology to map and report election-related violence in real time.

More and more African governments would now like to see young people get into politics. In 2008, the Rwandan government asked the NDI to develop a programme to help its youth play important roles within political parties. The Mano River Union (Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea) has a Youth Parliament that enables young people to deliberate and set their own agendas for their governments' consideration.

Kenya's ruling parties, the Party of National Unity and the Orange Democratic Movement, have introduced a national youth leadership programme to "integrate the youth in leadership today not tomorrow" through the promotion of "innovative community-driven development and youth entrepreneurship initiatives."

After his re-election in 2012, President Ernest Koroma of Sierra Leone appointed two people in their early thirties to the cabinet. To support these youngest-ever cabinet members, Sierra Leonean youth mobilized with singing and dancing in front of the parliament building during their confirmation hearings.



A first-time voter after casting her ballot at a polling station in Rondebosch, South Africa.
Panos/Eric Miller

With elections expected in 13 African countries in 2013, older politicians are seeking out creative, tech-savvy youth to assist in get-out-the-vote operations, reports the NDI.

Voting age controversy

Meanwhile, some are campaigning to lower the voting age to increase youth participation. Harvard University professor Calestous Juma, who is from Kenya, argues that while most African countries have set 18 as the minimum voting age, some of those between the ages of 12 and 18 work and are active in political discussions through social media. "Lowering the voting age to 16 for all African countries would not only reflect the demographic structure of the continent," says Mr. Juma, "but it would also expand political participation."

Mr. Juma's proposal is a controversial one, and he admits that lowering the voting age could expand meaningful political participation only if "accompanied by formal and political education." He wants older leaders "whose worldviews were shaped by more traditional societies" to be educated about the roles of young people in the modern world.

A survey of young people carried out in 2012 as part of a UN action plan on youth identifies political leaders' ignorance and indifference to youth matters as key concerns. It adds that this ignorance and indifference make leaders unlikely to "support youth branches of political organizations." That same year, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon outlined a number of actions that world leaders should take over the next five years. Those included addressing climate change, forging and implementing a consensus framework for sustainable development, and working with and for women and young people.

Clearly the momentum is with youth. At the Addis Ababa conference, they promised to "organize through the power of ideas" and push their desire to be at the decision-making table. Professor Akukwe urges current political leaders to bring young men and women into the mainstream of Africa's political life. That is the best down payment on Africa's development, he says.

A dry check dam near Magadi, Kenya. Panos/Dieter Telemans

What does the 'Doha Climate Gateway' mean for Africa?

Not nearly enough, given the continent's vulnerability

By **Richard Munang and Zhen Han**

$100bn

Amount pledged by donors per year by 2020 into the Green Climate Fund at the 2009 Copenhagen negotiations

A UN climate change conference in Doha, Qatar, concluded in December 2012 with a new agreement called the "Doha Climate Gateway." Its major achievements included the extension until 2020 of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well as a work plan for negotiating a new global climate pact by 2015, to be implemented starting in 2020.

Despite these commitments, the Doha conference made only limited progress in advancing international talks on climate change, and failed to set more ambitious goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

That failure increases the risk of a rise in average global temperatures by 2 degrees Celsius by the end of this century. The *Emissions Gap Report 2012* by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) stresses that if the world does not accelerate action on climate change, total yearly greenhouse gas emissions could rise to 58 gigatonnes by 2020 (compared to 40 gigatonnes in 2000), far above the level scientists say would likely keep temperature increases below 2°C.

Studies by the World Bank indicate that even with the current commitments and pledges fully implemented, there is roughly a 20% likelihood that temperature increases will top 4°C by the end of this century, triggering a cascade of cataclysmic changes, including extreme heat waves, declining global food stocks and a rising sea level, that will affect hundreds of millions of people.

All regions of the world will suffer if this happens, but the poor will suffer the most, and sustainable development in Africa will be set back considerably. Severe droughts in the Horn of Africa in 2011 and in the Sahel region in 2012 alarmingly highlighted Africa's vulnerability.

Not-so-fast finance

African countries are among those least likely to have the resources to withstand the adverse impacts of climate change. At the 2009 Copenhagen negotiations, developed countries committed to pay $100 billion per year by 2020 into the Green Climate Fund to help developing countries implement adaptation and mitigation practices to counter climate change. They also pledged to deliver $30 billion as "fast start finance" by 2012.

Disappointingly, a report by the African Climate Policy Centre of the UN Economic Commission for Africa shows that of the $30 billion promised in 2009, only 45% has been "committed," 33% "allocated" and about 7% actually "disbursed."

At the Doha conference, Germany, the UK, France, Denmark, Sweden and the EU Commission announced financial pledges totalling approximately $6 billion for the period up to 2015. Most developed countries did not make pledges. African countries thus left Doha with little more than they already had.

Bottom-up approach

Cost-effective measures need to be taken without delay to mitigate the effects of climate change in Africa. Fortunately, there are already many examples in Africa of bottom-up approaches that directly address national needs.

In Togo, for example, a water reservoir project provided accurate data for rehabilitating water dams. This data and expertise gained during the rehabilitation helped the government develop a proposal for rehabilitating all other water reservoirs in Togo. As a result, access to water has improved for most local communities, with rainwater harvested from rehabilitated dams available for domestic and agro-pastoral consumption.

In Seychelles, a rainwater harvesting project in schools gave students a practical demonstration of adaptation to climate change, with harvested water used for school gardens, cleaning and flushing toilets. It also enabled the schools to save up to $250 per month on water bills, money that could be invested in other areas such as teaching and learning resources. Legislation is now under consideration to include rainwater harvesting systems in building codes.

However successful such initiatives may be, their scale is limited. Sizable increases in capital are needed to expand the reach of such adaptation projects. Yet it is unclear whether Africa will ever have sufficient funds to enable the most vulnerable people to adapt to the negative impacts of climate change.

Before the Doha conference, developing countries elaborated a common position that included the desire for a new climate treaty, financing and new technologies to help them make the transition to cleaner, "green" economic practices. "We all have a responsibility in some way to address climate change in order to achieve sustainable development," said Ali Mohammed, Kenya's permanent secretary in the ministry of environment and mineral resources. "Africa, small island developing states and least developed countries continue to suffer most from the effects of climate change."

Priority for adaptation

Greater adaptation efforts in Africa are essential, and they should be supported financially and politically by many different stakeholders in Africa and around the globe. Not only should the process of long-term climate financing from developed countries be accountable and transparent, but it should also be directed first and foremost to the most vulnerable developing countries.

There also needs to be a better balance. Currently, "fast start" finance, however slow in arriving, is largely directed toward "mitigation" projects, which tackle the causes of climate change, such as by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Against the 62% allocated for mitigation projects, only 25% is destined to finance "adaptation" actions, which are intended to minimize the consequences of actual and expected changes in the climate. The remaining 13% goes to countering deforestation, which can also be counted as mitigation, since forests help absorb greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Seyni Nafo, the spokesperson of the African Group at the Doha talks, insisted, "In Africa, we need to know how much is new, where it is coming from, and whether it will be directed to the adaptation projects that are desperately necessary."

> "Not only should the process of long-term climate financing be accountable and transparent, it should also be directed foremost to the most vulnerable developing countries

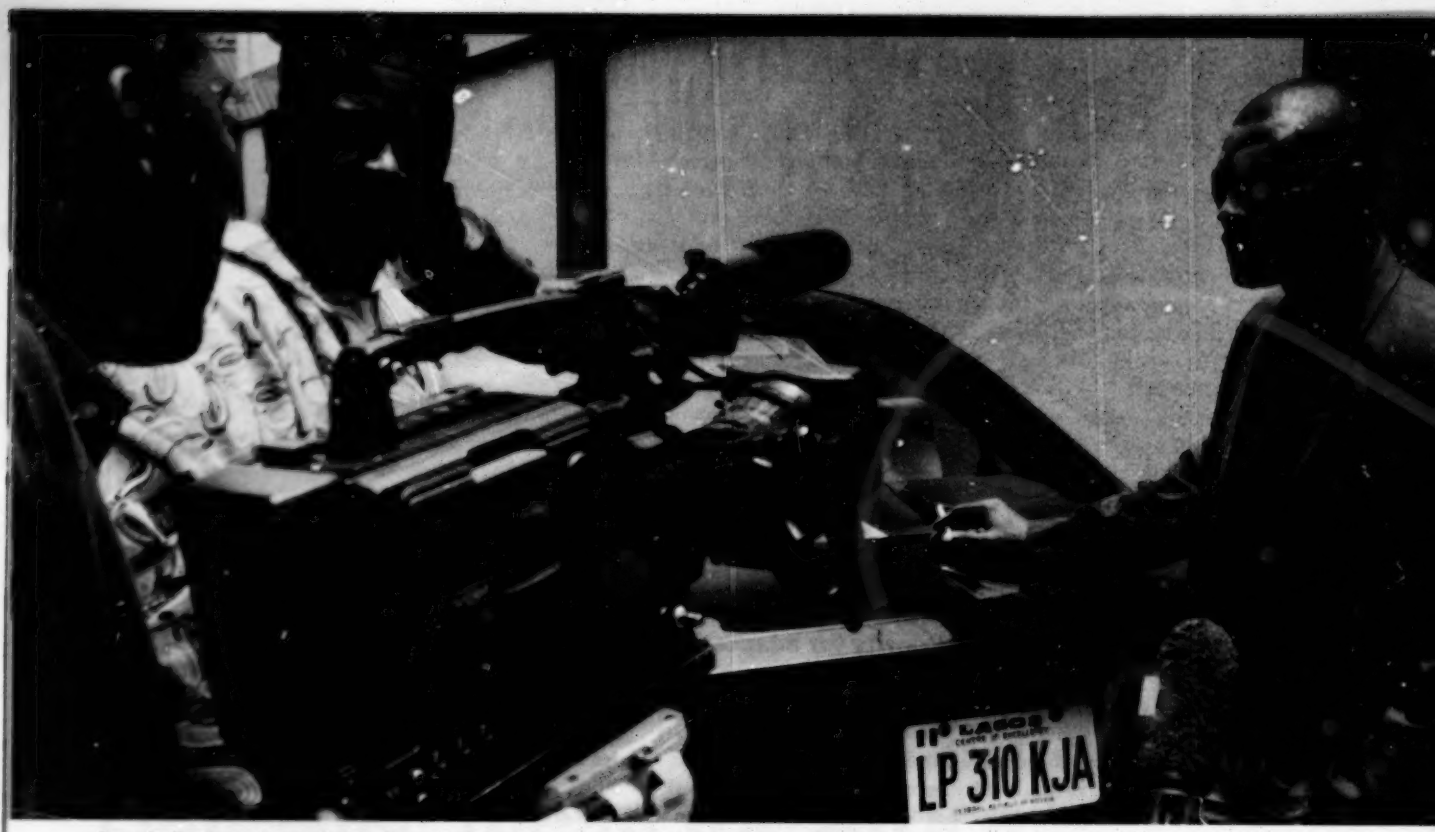
Positive steps

Despite the limited advances on financing, African countries gained five positive developments from the Doha conference:

- The formal extension of the Kyoto Protocol, with continued access to carbon-trading market mechanisms such as the Clean Development Mechanism.
- Financing for the formulation and implementation of national adaptation plans for all particularly vulnerable countries, not just the small island developing states and least developed countries, as previously.
- The agreement to develop an international mechanism to address loss and damage, which would support countries affected by slow-onset events such as droughts, glacial melting and rising sea levels.
- A programme for climate change education and training and for the creation of public awareness to enable the public to participate better in climate change decision-making.
- The agreement to assess developing countries' needs for green technology, as well as a pledge that no unilateral action will be taken on the development and transfer of technologies.

Effectively meeting the challenges of climate change will require a compromise of monumental proportions by all countries. But climate change will not wait for the adoption of binding international climate change agreements. Nor should individual governments, businesses and others hesitate to take bottom-up action and support local grassroots initiatives.

Richard Munang is a policy and programme coordinator for the Africa Climate Change Adaptation Programme of the UN Environment Programme, and Zhen Han is an environmental policy graduate fellow of the Council of World Women Leaders at Cornell University in the US.



A movie director, actors and a soundman on the set of a low-budget Nollywood movie production. Panos/Jacob Silberberg

Nigeria's film industry: a potential gold mine?

With more than a million people, Nollywood is the country's second largest employer

By **Rebecca Moudio**

As an entrepreneur, 32-year-old chemistry graduate Jason Njoku achieved success in a most unlikely way: he is Africa's largest distributor of Nigerian movies, and has raked in over $8 million since 2010, when he founded the company Iroko Partners. In December 2012 he captivated an audience at a conference in Texas, United States, as he narrated the story of his success after failures in some other business ventures. Mr. Njoku currently has 71 employees in Lagos, London and New York, and often boasts that "these people are working for us in a country with 50% unemployment." He was recently listed by Forbes, an American business magazine, as one of the top 10 young African millionaires to watch.

The Nigerian film industry is undoubtedly helping create jobs in a country with an economy that relies mainly on oil and agriculture. Over a million people are currently employed in the industry, making it the country's largest employer after agriculture. Although Nigeria's economy will grow by 7% this year, according to the African Development Bank, insufficient jobs for a growing youth population continue to be a huge concern.

One million new jobs

The Nigerian film industry, also known as Nollywood, produces about 50 movies per week, second only to India's Bollywood—more than Hollywood in the United States. Although its revenues are not on par with Bollywood's and Hollywood's, Nollywood still generates an impressive $590 million annually. Believing that if the industry is properly managed, a million more jobs could be created in the sector, the World Bank is currently assisting the Nigerian government to create a Growth and Employment in States project to support the entertainment industry, along with other industries.

Chioma Nwagboso, a World Bank finance and private sector specialist, says that the Bank understands the job creation potential of the Nigerian film industry and the need for a "fruitful export for the country." Without initial support from the government, Nollywood propelled itself to the position it occupies today, and a little lift could take the industry to even greater heights, she adds.

Low production costs

Koïchiro Matsuura, former director-general of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), says that "film and video production are shining examples of

how cultural industries, as vehicles of identity, values and meanings, can open the door to dialogue and understanding between peoples, but also to economic growth and development." The African film industry is not only an entertainment industry; it is also a moneymaker. Film industry analysts believe that the Nigerian cinema is the most popular on the continent.

Nollywood films have a large following in Africa and among Africans around the world. They gained popularity during the digital revolution of the early 1990s when camcorders replaced 35-millimeter film cameras, and digital systems replaced celluloid as recording devices. At the time, while some parts of the world adapted to the new digital technology, Nigeria continued to use inexpensive VHS tapes and players that were easily accessible and affordable to consumers. Eventually film technology evolved as movies made on DVDs started to generate huge demand.

On average, producing a movie in Nigeria costs between $25,000 and $70,000, says the British Broadcasting Corporation. The films are produced within a month and are profitable within two to three weeks of release. Most DVD movies easily sell more than 20,000 units, while the most successful ones sell over 200,000. But despite the success of the movies, Nollywood actors' incomes are low. Even the most popular get paid between $1,000 and $3,000 per film. Only a few can claim higher earnings. Actress Omotola Jalade Ekeinde, one of Nollywood's highest-paid performers, recently topped the charts at 5 million naira ($32,000) per film.

Tackling Piracy

Author Patrick Ebewo attributes the popularity of Nigerian movies not only to their low unit costs, but also to their "indigenous content of issues relevant to a mass audience." Through a combination of African storylines and Western technology, "these films document and recreate socio-political and cultural events," states Mr. Ebewo.

But Nollywood's popularity also means serious piracy problems. The World Bank estimates that for every legitimate copy sold, nine others are pirated. "In terms of exports, these movies are purchased and watched across the world — in other African countries, Europe, USA and the Caribbean, and almost all the exports are pirated copies," remarks Ms. Nwagboso. She adds that because there are currently few legal channels for exporting movies, few or no returns go to the filmmakers and practically no revenue goes to the government. The current collaboration between the World Bank and the Nigerian Export Promotion Council, the Nigerian Copyright Commission and the National Film and Video Censors Board is therefore necessary and urgent, many analysts believe.

Legitimate distributors also want an end to piracy. "We're the first guys to actually legally reach out in Lagos to the production houses, the owners of the movies, and negotiate and sign deals with these guys so they can finally get remunerated for their hard efforts," claims Mr. Njoku.

Shining light

The Nigerian government and other industry players, assisted by the World Bank, hope to fund anti-piracy measures such as the source identification code, which will create "a digital distribution platform for Nigerian films." The code will connect video clubs and retail outlets and ensure that only digitally secured content can be rented.

Euromonitor International and Reed Exhibitions, organizers of the World Travel Market, a global event for the travel industry, predicted in their November 2012 report that Africa's projected 5.2% GDP growth rate in 2013 would be due in part to the popularity of the Nigerian film industry, which it said would also attract domestic and regional tourism. While Nigeria was hosting the industry's top brass in March, President Goodluck Jonathan referred to Nollywood as "our shining light," adding that "whenever I travel abroad, many of my colleagues ask me about Nollywood." The challenge is to ensure this light shines even brighter in the future.

Nollywood by the numbers

$590mn
Estimated annual revenue of the Nigerian film industry

$200mn
Amount of a loan fund pledged by President Goodluck Jonathan to help finance the Nigerian film industry

$250,000
First loan given for the production of "Dr Bello," the first Nollywood film to debut in American movie theatres

50
The weekly average number of films produced in Nigeria

$25,000-$70,000
Average cost of Nollywood films

$250mn
Average cost of most top Hollywood films

Sources: Africa Movies News, BBC, New York Times

Lessons from Ethiopia

from page 13

and informal sectors, over 1.4 million jobs were created between 2006 and 2010, and over 1.2 million between 2011 and 2012. Many of those hired were young people.

More efforts needed

But not everyone is satisfied with the government's efforts to reduce joblessness. Samson Wolle, a senior researcher at the Access Capital Services Share company, an Addis Ababa–based business and research firm, faults government's "massive projects": he says these often require years to complete and that once they are completed their operation requires less labour. The result is that thousands will once again go into unemployment. He would like to see sustained financing of existing small businesses in order to promote their expansion and growth.

Mr. Wolle believes there must be an investment-friendly climate to attract domestic and foreign investors to labour-intensive technology industries. Improved access to electricity and clean water, and to quality education, hospitals and other social services, is a starting point. Such interventions, he further argues, will mitigate urban migration and encourage young graduates to work in the rural parts of Ethiopia, which are currently in dire need of educated and skilled workers.

Despite such criticisms, analysts generally agree that Ethiopia is on the right course in tackling youth unemployment.

Interview with youth envoy

from page 15

I will just say, do you know why it is called the UN? Because its mandate is to unite nations based on human rights, development, peace and security. It is also about promoting young people's work for the betterment of their families, communities and for the world we want future generations to inherit. The UN may not always accommodate the needs of everyone but the UN needs the young people now more than ever.

Do you have many friends and links with youth groups in Africa?

Yes I do. I am very passionate about young people in Africa and the dynamics in that continent. I look forward to my first official visit to Africa. Young people in Africa live in interesting times in which they can help in transforming their societies. If I am a young African I would be proud to be born at this time—opportunity to serve, to see great developments happening. There is a great human potential, human capital and great natural resources in Africa, but for me, Africa's greatest assets are the young people.

What are your hobbies?

I am a good reader. I play basketball.

What kinds of books?

I am more into history and politics and enjoy novels. I like sports—basketball and soccer. I like the Barcelona football club and Manchester United.

Africa's mobile youth drive change

from page 19

the receiver, are sent every day. This service evolved from the practice of "beeping," hanging up after one or two rings to avoid a charge while letting the other party know to call back. Phone users are also buying several SIM cards so they can switch between operators and save on interconnection fees.

Internet prices are coming down and speed is up, writes J. M. Ledgard in *Intelligent Life* magazine, thanks to fibre-optic submarine cables running along the East African coast and connecting several African countries, including South Africa, Mozambique, Madagascar, Tanzania, Kenya, Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan and the Comoros. Other fibre-optic cables run along Africa's west coast.

Teenage boys listening to a mobile phone in Cape Town, South Africa. Gallo Images/Alamy

Sub-Saharan Africa's mobile market by the numbers

Mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 people

1 billion

Expected total number of mobile cellular subscriptions in Africa by 2015. Mobile cellular subscriptions in 2005 totalled 90.3 million and in 2010 that figure stood at 384 million.

Number of countries with at least one mHealth app

Sub-Saharan Africa
Latin America & Caribbean
Middle East & North Africa
East Asia and Pacific
South Asia
Europe & Central Asia

Sources: World Bank, GSMA, Informa Telecoms & Media

There are 84 million Internet-enabled mobiles in Africa today, Ledgard points out. He predicts that by 2014, 69% of mobiles will have Internet access. In response to the burgeoning demand, markets are transitioning slowly from so-called feature phones with limited data access to low-cost smartphones with access to the Internet.

That's how James Akida, a 21-year-old Tanzanian, is able to use his phone to connect with his best friend who recently moved to the Bronx, in New York City. James spends a large amount of time on Facebook. He uses a text-only version of the site and pays no data fees, an important feature for people like him on a tight budget and using a prepaid service.

Facebook splits costs with the network operators and phone manufacturers. Google is following in its footsteps, providing free Internet access and also eliminating language barriers by becoming multilingual.

Text versus talk

It doesn't matter that James is a continent away. Face-to-face conversations are out, texting is in. Hangouts are no longer the craze for youth. Texting or SMS (short message service) has overtaken speaking on a mobile phone. Even when young people are physically in the same space, as 19-year-old college student Naomi Kaneza from Rwanda told *Africa Renewal*, they will secretly text each other. "Often, we'll SMS something we don't want to say out loud." Just a few years ago most people considered this kind of behaviour rude; now it's so frequent, it's grudgingly tolerated.

Even during social events like weddings, funerals and religious services, it's typical to see teens and young adults hunched over, peering into a small screen, thumb and forefinger poised ready to fly over the tiny keyboard to send a text message. It's no longer a fad; it's ingrained in the culture.

The mobile market in Africa, powered by youth, has great potential for investors because of the huge numbers. Facebook boasted 38 million users in Africa in 2011, prompting giants like Google and Microsoft to take notice. Microsoft launched YouthSpark in February with the aim of bringing one million small and medium-size African enterprises online by absorbing the existing young workforce.

The game changer

Mobile technology is also putting a dent in Africa's youth unemployment rate. In both urban and rural areas, young people are often the ones managing the mobile phone kiosks that offer a variety of services, from selling airtime to making repairs to unlocking phones to charging them. The trading of airtime for cash has become a lucrative business in Africa.

In Kenya the economic impact of mobile telephony has been huge. The Global Mobile Tax Review and Deloitte show that in 2011 the industry contributed about $3.6 billion to the country's gross domestic product. It has also made a significant contribution to employment, with an estimated 280,000 points of sale for mobile services in 2011, including kiosks and *dukas*, which are phone and electrical goods stores.

M-Pesa, the mobile phone–based money transfer service launched by Kenya's mobile network operator Safaricom, is perhaps the most successful and lucrative digital innovation in Africa so far. In the last month of 2011 it was able to move $1.35 billion, writes Kenya's *Business Daily* using data from the Central Bank of Kenya.

Building on that model, young African software developers are seeking solutions to everyday problems. Some of them are even developing software apps themselves, like Christine Ampaire of Uganda, who made the newspaper *East African*'s list of Top 20 Young Innovators to Watch. After the success of her app Mafuta Go, which helps users find the nearest petrol station with the cheapest prices, she is developing an SMS-based app for taxi motorcycle riders in the capital city, Kampala, whose phones do not have access to the Internet.

These digital innovations are not only in the business sector, but also in agriculture, health and education, like Namibia Polytechnic's cell phone–based curriculum.

Mobile apps could just become a game changer for Africa's development, concludes *East African*.

Africa unveils its first smartphone and tablet

By **Aissata Haidara**

Excitement greeted news that Vérone Mankou, the 26-year old entrepreneur from the Republic of Congo, has designed Africa's first smartphone and a tablet, the hand-held computer that comes with a touch screen.

Mankou's tech company, VMK, designed the sleek smartphone and tablet, which was originally conceived in 2006 as an affordable computer to give Africans access to Internet. The devices run on Google's Android software and are assembled in China, making some technology analysts question Mr. Mankou's assertion that these were the first African touchpad tablet and smartphone. In response to such criticism, Mr. Mankou writes on his website, "We are somewhat offended by the disregard of those who persist in denying the authentication of our products, despite evidence."

To reinforce the Made-in-Africa claim, Mr. Mankou named his smartphone Elikia, for "hope" in Congolese Lingala dialect. The official name for the tablet is Way-C, and it comes with wireless internet connectivity and four gigabytes of internal storage. Elikia has rear and forward-facing cameras and a 3.5in (8.9cm) screen, 512MB of RAM, and a 650MHz processor. Mr. Mankou plans to sell the devices across African countries as well as in Belgium, France and India.

VMK's smartphone will have to compete against established brands such as Blackberry and Nokia, while the tablet has to face Apple's iPad, Samsung Galaxy and others. About his smartphone, Mr. Mankou says, "We wanted to place on the market a quality smartphone with the same capacities as the others, while ensuring that it's a product which is accessible to all."

Mr. Mankou hopes to rely on pan-African sentiments. There appears to be an increasing desire among some in Africa to support homegrown products. Recently, for instance, there was a minor incident with app purchasing when Google Play did not accept credit cards issued in the Congo. VMK announced its own app store with apps "developed by Africans for Africa" and prepaid gift cards to give Africans a similar experience.

Several technology bloggers in Africa believe VMK's devices, which are currently available through telecom carrier Airtel with the possible addition of MTN and Warid, could still expand their reach and compete on the international market. The Congolese entrepreneur has set big ambitions for his devices, "Apple is huge in the US, Samsung is huge in Asia, and we want VMK to be huge in Africa," he says. ●

The VMK elikia smartphone. VMK

Artist's impression of the future Konza Technology City, Kenya. *Konza Techno City/Kenya ICT Board*

Kenya pushes technology into overdrive

The country that gave the world two groundbreaking innovations in technology: M-Pesa, a mobile banking system, and Ushahidi, a platform for crowdsourcing information during disasters, is now taking its technological talents to new heights. The East African nation of Kenya has just started construction on a 5,000-acres piece of land in Konza, about 60km south of Nairobi, to turn the savannah area into "the most modern city in Africa".

Using the same company that designed Brooklyn's Barclays Center in New York City, SHoP Architects, Kenyan authorities want to transform Nairobi's Konza City into Africa's technology hub, dubbed Silicon Savannah, similar to California's Silicon Valley. The designers told the UK's *Financial Times* that "the scale of the project compares with creating another Manhattan, central London or inner-city Beijing."

The Konza techno city project is the brainchild of Bitange Ndemo, Kenya's permanent secretary in the ministry of information and communications. "Rather than echo a smattering of tech parks and business centres starting up on the continent," says the *Financial Times*, "Kenya envisions a broader city-from-scratch to bring research universities, industry and government together, along the lines of Silicon Valley".

The *Wired* magazine reported that Konza's development "plan is extremely ambitious" and is "not just seen as a way of attracting investment from international tech companies and inspiring domestic entrepreneurs, but also as a way of reducing the corruption that has been endemic in the nation for several decades."

Konza is expected to cement Kenya's role as a regional technology leader in Africa. With a well developed technology sector, Kenya became the first country in Africa to open its government to the public by making millions of pages of internal governments documents available online. The country's M-Pesa cell phone banking service is now being used all over the world for purchases and money transfers, and according to the US *Time* magazine, Ushahidi has been used "in 128 countries to map everything from [the 2010] earthquake in Haiti to [the] Japanese tsunami and the Arab Spring."

The unveiling of the Konza project is being seen as a natural progression of Kenya's aspirations to attract corporate investments in technology. In 2012, IBM set up its first African research lab in Nairobi, joining renowned American companies like Google, Microsoft and Intel that have their regional headquarters Kenya. Konza is heavily-influenced by similar "new cities", like Cyberjaya in Malaysia, Cyber City in Mauritius and Egypt's Smart Village, says the *Wired*.

The project is expected to cost $10 billion and create more than 200,000 jobs when completed in 2030. There are plans for an electronic manufacturing plant, an international financial centre and a convention centre. The government is offering tax breaks to companies as an incentive to move and invest in Konza.

Amid the euphoria and excitement over the prospects for Silicon Savannah, there have been some voices of caution. Technology experts at the Mobile Web East Africa conference held in Nairobi in February warned Kenya's technology industry against copying the Silicon Valley business model. Their concern was that most of the companies being formed in Kenya were based on a single app or software programme.

"Kenya should be more of a 'Digital Savannah' and not 'Silicon Savannah', says TMS "Teddy" Ruge, co-founder of Project Diaspora USA/Uganda, an organization that mobilizes resources from Africans in diaspora to invest in Africa, "We are yet to manufacture things here, and most of the companies we have here are based on digital solutions."

Kenya's reputation as a technology leader in Africa suffered an embarrassing setback during the March national elections when both a biometric ID system designed to avoid multiple voting and an electronic transmission system to speed up vote counting broke down. The country's independent electoral body was forced to switch to counting votes manually, slowing down the process and causing national anxiety.

Notwithstanding, Konza appears to be proving skeptics wrong. So far, more than a dozen companies are expected to start setting up operations in Konza.

"Konza will become a game-changer in Kenya's socio-economic development, spurring massive trade and investment across the entire region," said President Mwai Kibaki at the groundbreaking ceremony held in January at the proposed new city. ●

Livestock tracking in Africa goes high tech

By **Pavithra Rao**

In an era of lightning speed, ever-present wireless connectivity, high tech is now also being used to benefit livestock farmers in rural areas of Africa. Widely known for being used to track wild animals, GPS, or "Global Positioning System" tracking devices are being adapted by some small- and large-scale farmers to manage their livestock, notably in Kenya, Botswana, and South Africa.

Tracking an animal is accomplished through either the bolus technique, in which an animal is made to swallow a tracking "tablet", or through a microchip implantation or an ear-tagging technique. Once fitted with a device, GPS technology can precisely pinpoint an animal's location and alert farmers whenever the livestock goes missing or is stolen.

In addition, the technology is being fine-tuned to give farmers the ability to control outbreaks of diseases. Explaining how the GPS system works on animals, Ebby Nanzala of the *New Agriculturalist*, an online magazine that focuses on tropical agriculture, says, "Through their unique numbers on the tag, they [farmers] are able to maintain the data. If there is a disease outbreak, it will be easier for it to be tracked and controlled."

Through GPS trackers, farmers can precisely pinpoint the location of livestock over any given area. Creative Commons/Dohduhdah

Mr. Nanzala adds that though the costs for such technology are high, the cost of losing animals to theft and disease is clearly higher. While allaying fears of the high cost of technology, he notes that with government support, "the [GPS tracking] chips will be very cheap and could be used and re-used for over 30 years".

Similarly, the UN Food and Agricultural Organization has created a GPS-based mobile phone application that will inform farmers of their animals' vaccination schedules, veterinary treatments as well as disease outbreaks. ●

APPOINTMENTS

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appointed **Aeneas Chapinga Chuma** of Zimbabwe as his deputy special representative responsible for recovery and governance with the UN Mission in Liberia. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Chuma served as the UN resident coordinator in Kenya from 2008 to 2012 and in Zambia from 2003 to 2008. He also served as the deputy resident representative in Mozambique from 2000 to 2003 and in Uganda from 1996 to 2000. Previously, he worked as a macroeconomist and econometrician with the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.

José Ramos-Horta of Timor-Leste has been named as special representative and head of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau. He brings with him more than three decades of diplomatic and political experience in the service of peace and stability in Timor-Leste and beyond. As President of Timor-Leste, from 2007 to 2012, Mr. Ramos-Horta contributed to healing the wounds and stabilizing the situation in his country following the crisis of 2006. He also served as foreign minister from 2001 to 2006 and as prime minister from 2006 to 2007. The new special representative succeeds Joseph Mutaboba of Rwanda.

The UN Secretary-General and African Union Commission Chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma have appointed **Mohamed Ibn Chambas** of Ghana as their joint special representative for Darfur and head of the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur, with responsibilities including those of AU-UN joint chief mediator. Mr. Chambas brings to his new position extensive experience after a long and distinguished career in both international and governmental forums, most recently as Secretary-General of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. Mr. Chambas replaces Ibrahim Gambari of Nigeria.

Maj. Gen. Delali Johnson Sakyi of Ghana has been selected as the force commander for the UN Mission in South Sudan. At the time of his appointment, Maj. Gen. Sakyi was serving as the assistant commandant of the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College, Junior Division. He previously served as commander of the Army Combat Training School. Maj.Gen. Sakyi has also served as commander of the Ghanaian contingent in several UN peacekeeping missions, including as a sector commander with the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire in 2008. He succeeds Maj. Gen. Moses Bisong Obi of Nigeria.

AFRICA BOOKS

African Theatre 9: Histories 1850-1950, eds. Martin Banham, James Gibbs and Femi Osofisan (James Currey, Oxford, UK, 2010; 199 pp; pb $29.95)

Art and Trauma in Africa: Representations of Reconciliation in Music, Visual Arts, Literature and Film (International Library of Cultural Studies) by Lizelle Bisschoff and Stefanie Van de Peer (I. B. Tauris, London, UK, 2013; 264 pp; hb £59.50)

The Challenges of Administrative Political and Developmental Renewal in Africa: Emerging Issues by John W. Forje (Nova Science Publishers, New York, New York, USA, 2009; 216 pp; hb $69; pb $43)

Challenges of African Transformation, eds. Angathevar Baskaran, Mammo Muchie (Africa Institute of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa, 2013; 232 pp; £22.95)

China and Angola A Marriage of Convenience? eds. Marcus Power, Ana Alves (Fahamu Books, Oxford, UK, 2013; 192 pp; pb £16.95)

Colonial Meltdown: Northern Nigeria in the Great Depression by Moses E. Ochon (Ohio University Press, OH, USA, 2012; 272 pp; pb $24.95)

Contemporary African Cultural Productions, ed. V.Y. Mudimbe (Codesria, Dakar, Senegal, 2013; 328 pp; pb £24.95)

Constructing African Art Histories for the Lagoons of Côte d'Ivoire by Monica Blackmun Visonà (Ashgate Publishing, London, UK, 2010; 216 pp; hb $109.95)

A Comprehensive Tax History of Nigeria, eds. Federal Inland Revenue Service, Nigeria (Safari Books, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria, 2012; 298 pp; pb £34.95)

Creating Systems of Innovation in Africa, eds. Angathevar Baskaran, Mammo Muchie (Africa Institute of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa, 2013; 232 pp; £22.95)

The Design and Implementation of Business Process Reengineering in the Ethiopian Public Sector: An Assessment of Four Organizations by Atkilt Hagos and Tesfaye Debela (OSSREA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; 2011; 178 pp; pb £18.95)

The Dying Sahara US Imperialism and Terror in Africa by Jeremy Keenan (Pluto Press, London, UK, 2013; 352 pp; pb £17.50)

The Ewe People: A Study of the Ewe People in German Togo by Jakob Spieth (African Book Collective, London, UK, 2011; 980 pp; pb £59.95)

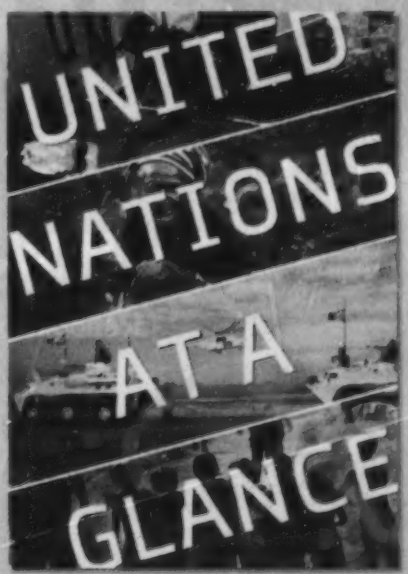
The Fear: Robert Mugabe and the Martyrdom of Zimbabwe by Peter Godwin (Little, Brown and Company, New York, New York, USA, 2011; 384 pp; hb $26.99)

The Global Hunger Crisis Tackling Food Insecurity in Developing Countries by Majda Bne Saad (Pluto Press, London, UK, 2013; 312 pp; pb £19.50)

BOOK REVIEW

United Nations at a Glance

by the Department of Public Information of the United Nations
United Nations, New York, NY, USA, 2013; 217 pp; pb $20



Ever wanted to get a quick snapshot of what the United Nations is all about, from both a historical and current perspective? A new guide, ***United Nations at a Glance***, might just be what you have been waiting for. The book delves into the work of the global body on issues ranging from international peace and security, to economic and social development, to human rights and humanitarian work. It uses examples extracted from real life situations and events in which the UN was either directly involved or played a vital role.

Illustrated and enhanced with compelling stories from around the world, this guide contains historical information on how and why the UN came into existence; how it evolved from an ancient philosophical idea and a nascent war time alliance into the largest grouping of nations the world has ever known, and explains why it has become so essential to the everyday lives and livelihoods of millions around the world.

In straightforward language, ***United Nations at a Glance*** explains what the UN does, how and where it does it and with what financial and material means, who the actors are, when and where historical milestones occurred, and the objectives that will continue to warrant UN support in the years to come.

The guide is primarily intended to serve as an educational resource. It contains up-to-date and factual information about the principal organs of the UN as well as its specialized agencies, funds, programmes, institutes and other entities. It illustrates how the global body responds to the major contemporary challenges posed by the global financial crisis, food insecurity, terrorism, climate change, natural disasters, intolerance, poverty, and epidemics, by promoting the universality of human rights, peace and security for all, sustainable development, respect for the rule of law, and education for all.

United Nations at a Glance also contains rich statistics, questions and answers, quick references to online resources, information about UN members and international observances, as well as its network of information centres.

For anyone who wants to know more about the world's foremost intergovernmental organization, ***United Nations at a Glance*** is certainly the right place to start. It complements other UN flagship publications such the ***Yearbook of the United Nations*** and ***Basic Facts about the United Nations***.

The Hard Road to Reform: The Politics of Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement, ed. Brian Raftopoulos (Weaver Press, Harare, Zimbabwe, 2013; 282 pp; pb £20.95)

The Horn of Africa: Intra-State and Inter-State Conflicts and Security, ed. Redie Bereketeab (Pluto Press, London, UK, 2013; 272 pp; pb £21.99)

Implementing the Public Finance Management Act in South Africa by Russell Wildeman and Wellington Jogo (Idasa, Pretoria, South Africa, 2012; 58 pp; pb £15.95)

Mother Is Gold, Father Is Glass. Gender and Colonialism in a Yoruba Town by Lorelle D. Semley (Indiana University Press, Indiana, USA, 2010; 232 pp ; hb $70 pb $24.95)

Osogbo and the Art of Heritage: Monuments, Deities, and Money by Peter Probst (Indiana University Press, Indiana, USA, 2011; 216 pp; hb $70 pb $24.95)

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